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ABSTRACT

This document traces the development of Australia's technical and further education (TAFE) system, which offers a wide range of courses providing education and training for employment at the operative, trade, and paraprofessional levels, as well as general education and literacy programs. The following are among the topics discussed: (1) general principles of TAFE and features distinguishing TAFE institutes from other tertiary institutes; (2) TAFE's historical background (technical education between 1890 and 1970, Commonwealth Government intervention in education to 1970); (3) the Whitlam years (Australia in the early 1970s, pressures for change to technical education, the Kangan committee, the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education recommendations); (4) Commonwealth policy directions between 1976 and 1982 (the Fraser Government's policies; the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, major government reports); (5) changes in TAFE between 1976 and 1982; (6) the Hawke government's early years (labor market programs, review of TAFE funding, the demise of Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission funding); (7) the late 1980s (Skills for Australia, the National Board of Employment Education and Training, the restructuring of higher education, industrial award restructuring, the National Training Board); (8) the restructuring of state TAFE systems; (9)

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the progression from TAFE to vocational education and training; and (10) TAFE in the late 1990s and beyond. (Contains 190 references.) (MN)

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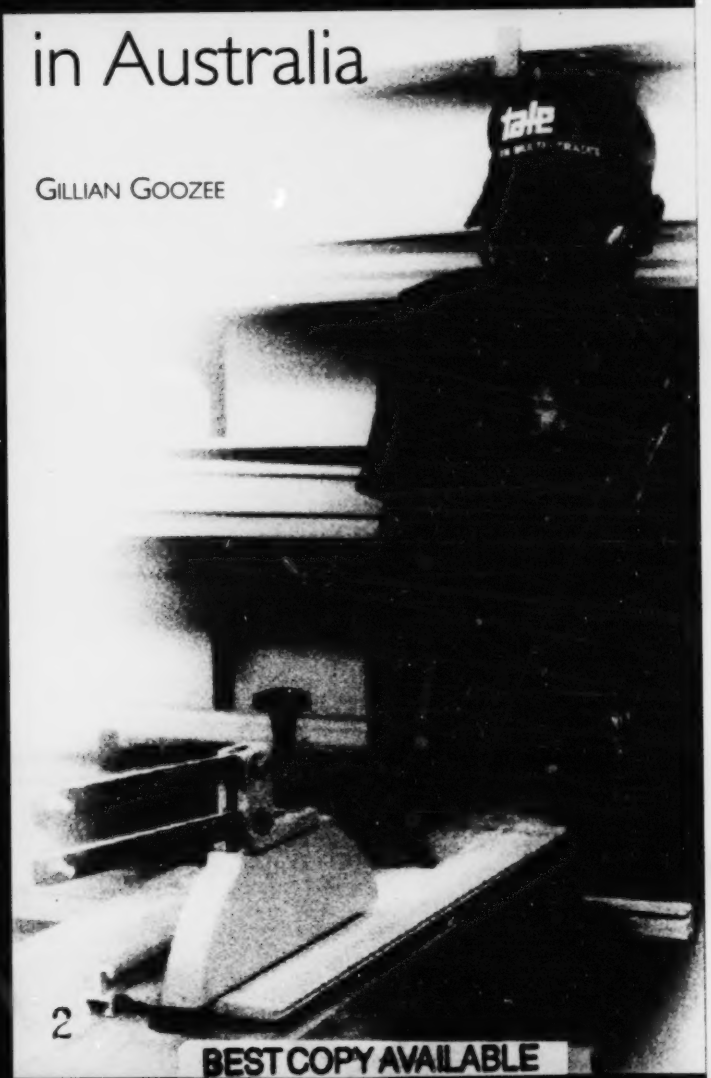
The development of TAFE in Australia

GILLIAN GOOZEE



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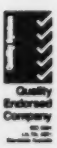

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Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACAAE	Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education
ACE	Adult and Community Education
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACET	Australian Council for Employment and Training
ACOTAFE	Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTA	Australian Council of Tertiary Awards
ACTC	Australian Committee on TAFE Curriculum
ACTD	Australian Conference of TAFE Directors
ACTRAC	Australian Committee on Training Curriculum
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AEC	Australian Education Council
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AMES	Adult Migrant English Service (formerly Adult Migrant Education Service)
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AQAB	Australian Qualifications Advisory Board
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ARC	Australian Research Council
ARF	Australian Recognition Framework
ASEAS	Adult Secondary Education Allowance Scheme
ASF	Australian Standards Framework
ASTF	Australian Student Traineeship Foundation
ATF	Australian Teachers Federation
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
ATS	Australian Traineeship System
AUC	Australian Universities Commission
AVC	Australian Vocational Certificate
AVTS	Australian Vocational Training System
BOG	Building Officers Group
BVET	Board of Vocational Education and Training (NSW)
CAE	College of Advanced Education
CBT	Competency-based Training
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
COSTAC	Commonwealth State Training Advisory Committee
COTTE	Committee on Technical Teacher Education
CPSG	Curriculum Projects Steering Group
CRTS	Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme
CTEC	Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission
CRAFT	Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-time Training
CYSS	Community Youth Support Scheme
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training (Commonwealth)

DEETSA	Department of Employment, Education and Training South Australia
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs (Commonwealth)
DEIR	Department of Employment and Industrial Relations
DEIRT	Department of Employment, Industrial Relations and Training (Tasmania)
DET	Department of Education and Training (NSW)
DETAFE	Department of Employment and TAFE (SA)
	Department of Employment, Training and Further Education (SA)
DETIR	Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Commonwealth)
DEVET	Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training (WA)
DEVETIR	Department of Employment, Vocational Education Training and Industrial Relations (Queensland)
DFE	Department of Further Education (SA)
DIEA	Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
DIRETFE	Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education (NSW)
DIRVET	Department of Industrial Relations, Vocational Education and Training (Tas)
DITAC	Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce
DTEC	Department of Training and Education Co-ordination (NSW)
DVET	Department of Vocational Education and Training (Tas)
EPUY	Education Program for Unemployed Youth
ESFC	Employment and Skills Formation Council
HEC	Higher Education Council
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Body
JC TAFES	Joint Committee on TAFE Statistics
MAATS	Modern Apprenticeship and Traineeship System
MINCO	(ANTA) Ministerial Council
MOLAC	Ministers of Labour Advisory Committee
MOVEET	Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training
NAAS	National Apprentice Assistance Scheme
NAC	New Apprenticeship Centre
NBEET	National Board of Employment, Education and Training
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NEAT	National Employment and Training [Scheme]
NETTFORCE	National Employment and Training Taskforce
NFROT	National Framework for the Recognition of Training
NSDC	National Staff Development Committee
NTB	National Training Board
NTC	National Training Council
NTCC	National TAFE Chief Executives Committee
NTETA	Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority
NTF	National Training Framework
NTFC	National Training Framework Committee
NWPWAT	National Working Party of Women's Advisers in TAFE
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTFE	Office of Training and Further Education (Vic)
OTEN	Open Training and Education Network (NSW)
PEP	Participation and Equity Program

PETE	Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment (Vic)
QEVET	Queensland Employment, Vocational Education and Training [Board]
RATE	Register of Australian Tertiary Education
RED	Regional Employment Development [Scheme]
RITAs	Recognised Industry Training Agents
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SCC	Standards and Curriculum Council
SESDA	State Employment and Skills Development Authority (Western Australia)
STB	State Training Board (Vic)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TAFEC	Technical and Further Education Commission
TAFETAA	TAFE Teachers Association of Australia
TAFE.TEQ	TAFE Training and Employment Queensland
TASTA	Tasmanian State Training Authority
TBPE	Trade Based Pre- Employment
TEAS	Tertiary Education Allowance Scheme
TEASA	Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia
TOCC	TAFE Operations and Coordination Committee
VEETAC	Vocational Education Employment and Training Advisory Committee
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETA	Vocational Education and Training Authority
VEET	Vocational Education, Employment and Training [Board] (SA)
VETAB	Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (NSW)
VETEC	Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission (Queensland)
VPSEC	Victorian Post Secondary Education Commission
WADT	Western Australian Department of Training
WAPSEC	Western Australian Post Secondary Education Commission
YTP	Youth Training Program

1 Introduction

Technical and Further Education (or TAFE) is the largest provider of post-secondary education in Australia. TAFE systems are administered by eight different State and Territory authorities of widely varying size and character.

TAFE systems have a number of characteristics which distinguish them from other sectors of education. An important feature is the geographical spread of TAFE institutes, with eighty-four institutes operating over 300 campuses around Australia. TAFE also offers an extremely wide range of courses which provide education and training for employment at the operative, trade and paraprofessional level, as well as general education and literacy programs. A major difference between TAFE and higher education institutions is the diversity of course durations, which range from a few hours for refresher courses to two or three years for associate diploma and diploma courses and, consequently, the wide range of credentials which includes statements of attainment, certificates, diplomas and advanced diplomas.

Another characteristic of TAFE is the variety of attendance patterns. Unlike higher education and schools which have large full-time student populations, the majority of TAFE students attend part time or study externally, combining work and study. Part-time attendance can include attendance either during the day or in the evening, by block release or through distance education. Attendance can be full time for all or part of a year or for several days or hours per week. Increasingly, TAFE is looking at taking courses to the student either through use of technology or providing programs at the workplace.

Unlike universities, which are autonomous institutions, most TAFE systems originated and developed as parts of government departments. This has meant that as well as being educational institutions, they have had to operate within a public administration framework. As a result, over the past twenty years, TAFE has been expected to implement both Commonwealth Government and State Government economic, social justice and education policies.

The history of technical education up to the early 1970s, when it acquired its new name TAFE, shows a sector of education which, although fulfilling a critical role in providing post-secondary education and training for large numbers of people, was consistently under-valued and under-resourced. The development of technical education has not been consistent but has been characterised by periods of rapid change followed by much longer periods of neglect. Thus technical education has usually tended to prosper during times of national crises such as world wars and economic depressions when increased funding was provided for both buildings and student places. For example, in the 1930s, while technical education, along with other forms of education, suffered financially in the early part of the Depression, by the middle of that decade there were insistent demands for an expansion of technical education to alleviate the problem of unemployed youth. This led, among other provisions, to the establishment of day training classes for unemployed youth and for some Commonwealth funds to be provided to the States for this purpose. Similarly, in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, both Commonwealth Government and State Governments have provided funds and programs aimed at alleviating the problems of the high levels of unemployment of young people.

Perhaps part of the problem faced by technical education in establishing its position in the education spectrum prior to the 1970s was the lack of a clear identity and charter. In part, this was probably the result of the wide range of courses and awards and, in part, a result of the diversity of structures across Australia. To some extent, technical education in Australia had to be self-defining and it therefore lacked the immediate recognition of roles and structures that characterised both the school and higher education sectors. The inclusion of technical

education as a sub-section of departments of education tended to restrict development as, generally, first priority in funding was given to schools. It was not until the Commonwealth Government commenced providing designated grants to TAFE systems in the 1970s that those States that still had technical education as part of their departments of education started expanding and upgrading their facilities.

The difficulty in establishing a clear charter for technical education has also been exacerbated by the question of status of awards. Throughout its history, there has been conflict between technical education and the other sectors of education, particularly universities, about what has been an appropriate role. Professional associations have had a significant influence on which institution should provide the professional education and training for their members. For example, in the 1890s and early 1900s there was constant friction between Sydney Technical College and Sydney University over who should offer what course. Following the establishment, by legislation, of registration boards for occupations such as dentistry and pharmacy, the criterion for registration was established as a degree, rather than the traditional technical education diploma, and the courses were consequently moved to the university. A similar process occurred with all engineering courses, with the exception of sanitary engineering, which was deemed to be more appropriate for a technical college than a university. The history of technical education in New South Wales, in particular, is one where the top levels of technical education courses have been continually creamed off by higher education institutions and subsequently upgraded to degrees, usually at the request of the relevant professional body. The perceived need to upgrade the status of a profession in the eyes of the community, by requiring a degree as the entry criterion, has not only under-valued TAFE credentials but has also exacerbated the difficulties TAFE has had in creating and maintaining a clear identity.

In the British tradition, universities have been regarded as having a distinct role from other tertiary institutions. Although there has been continuing argument as to the precise nature of this role, and although it can be demonstrated that the university of the 1990s in both Britain and Australia differs significantly in many respects from the universities of the 1850s, there is still a belief that the fundamental role of the universities has not changed and is still the same as articulated by Ashby in 1946:

> *Here is the criterion for determining what subject or parts of a subject should be taught at a university. If the subject lends itself to disinterested thinking; if generalisation can be extracted from it; if it can be advanced by research; if in brief, it breeds ideas in the mind, then the subject is appropriate for a university. If, on the other hand, the subject borrows all its principles from an older study (as journalism does from literature, or salesmanship from psychology, or massage from anatomy and physiology) and does not lead to generalisation, then the subject is not a proper one for a university. Let it be taught somewhere by all means. It is important that there should be opportunities for training in it. But it is a technique, not an exercise for maintaining intellectual health; and the place for technique is a technical college.*
>
> (Ashby, cited in Hermann et al. 1976, p.27)

Although universities now teach journalism and marketing, there is still a belief that there is a fundamental difference in the level and type of education provided by universities and TAFE in that university education involves higher cognitive skills and a more theoretical approach and, so, is more valuable than the more applied approach taken by technical education. This view was expressed in the Murray report in 1957, when the committee saw a great danger that:

> *a technical college, or another institution of a similar type, which is performing excellently its proper function of producing the technicians and craftsmen for whom there is an urgent national need, may be led by a false sense of values to try its hand at producing another type, the professional engineer or technologist and so lessen its effectiveness for its own particular task.*
>
> (Committee on Australian Universities 1957)

This view is still current today. In the chairman's foreword to the final report of the Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy, *Learning for life*, Roderick West said:

The submissions that our committee received supported the widespread view that VET should continue to teach competencies and maintain the strong focus on skills and higher education should cultivate attributes. Each sector should have clearly expressed goals. There should be articulation and credit transfer between the sectors and, where possible, facilities should be shared as well in order to effect economies. The curricula, however, should be clearly defined and discrete.

(Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy 1998, p.9)

Ever since its inception, TAFE has been expected to fill all the educational and training gaps. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, most technical education systems provided 'continuation' courses for post-primary students. This role was relinquished only when secondary schools were established. In Western Australia, Perth Technical College provided not only continuation courses but also university courses under licence from the University of Adelaide until the University of Western Australia was established. In times of war, TAFE has been expected to train both service personnel and the civilian population. In times of economic depression, TAFE has been expected to run ameliorative programs for the unemployed. When the New South Wales Department of Technical Education lost its diploma courses to the University of New South Wales, with the subsequent upgrading of them to degree courses, TAFE then developed certificate courses to fill the gap created for training for paraprofessional occupations. Today, TAFE is expected to provide the vocational education and training (VET) needs of industry, the entry-level VET requirements of 15–19 year olds, the special needs of disadvantaged groups within society and the retraining needs of those who wish to re-enter the workforce after an absence or as a result of redundancy. Whilst the other two sectors of education have clearly defined roles, the schools by age and the universities by awards, TAFE, throughout its long history, has been required to fill all the other educational needs of the community and industry.

The release of the report of the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, *TAFE in Australia* (ACOTAFE 1974), the subsequent establishment of the Technical and Further Education Commission (TAFEC) and the provision of Commonwealth funding in the 1970s had a dramatic effect on technical education in all States. It meant that technical education under its new name TAFE was recognised nationally as a distinct identity within the education spectrum. It meant that both the quality and quantity of TAFE provision could be raised. However, it also meant that, for the first time, the Commonwealth was intervening in TAFE policy and practice. This last development has had a significant impact on TAFE over the past twenty-five years.

In researching this topic, it became clear that despite the major changes that have occurred in TAFE over the past two decades, particularly its growth and its emergence as a major part of the tertiary education sector, there was very little documentation of the development of TAFE during this period. This is particularly noticeable when comparing the lack of information on TAFE with the vast amount written and published on schools and higher education institutions. The literature review provided some useful historical sources but revealed only limited documentation of the changes that have occurred in TAFE since the Kangan report in 1974. The main sources of information have, therefore, been government reports, departmental annual reports and interviews with people who were involved in many of the major events during this period. Clarification of structural changes within TAFE systems was obtained from individual officers within these systems.

This book is essentially a history of TAFE policy and administrative arrangements at both State and national levels. A brief review of the history of technical education in Australia and of Commonwealth involvement in TAFE prior to 1970 is provided in chapter 2, as it is difficult to understand the present day TAFE system and structure without an understanding of TAFE's origins. The main themes of the following chapters are the impact of the increasing level of Commonwealth Government intervention in TAFE policies and programs, the inter-relationship between the Commonwealth and States over the past twenty-five years and the structural changes that have occurred at Commonwealth and State levels.

2 Historical background

Introduction

TAFE in Australia has always been the responsibility of State Governments and colonial governments. Although State technical education institutions had common origins, they all developed their own individual structures as a result of the different social, economic, demographic, geographic and political characteristics of each State. As well, as King points out, 'major differences between the States appear to have arisen from the accidents of history which at critical times have brought forward men of influence in different States' (King 1966, p.77). As he says, there is no simple explanation of the fact that in Victoria and South Australia, technical education institutions have survived relatively independent of government control (at least until the 1970s), nor is it possible to understand, without reference to history, the emergence in New South Wales of a separate Department of Technical Education.

Before looking at the immense changes that have occurred in TAFE since 1974, it is important to understand the environmental factors that shaped the development of technical education up to the 1970s. Not only does this explain how the different structures developed but also why they have stayed relatively unchanged from the late nineteenth century and how these factors have influenced the way in which the different States have reacted to the events and challenges of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

The establishment of technical education in Australia

As Hermann points out, 'in Australia further education systems and their legal and educational arrangements not surprisingly have tended to replicate their British counterparts' (Hermann et al. 1976, p.27). In Britain, the main form of training skilled labour was through the apprenticeship system. Because of the need for, and the shortage of, skilled labour in Australia in its early years of colonisation, the apprenticeship system developed very quickly in the early nineteenth century. The importance of apprenticeships as a source of labour was illustrated by the passing of a series of apprenticeship laws in New South Wales in 1828 and 1844 and in Tasmania in 1844. Although in Europe there was a movement towards the establishment of industrial schools to provide trade training, Britain retained its traditional apprenticeship system and Australia followed suit.

The first forms of adult technical education in Australia were the mechanics institutes and schools of arts. The mechanics institutes movement began:

> *with a flourish with the Edinburgh School of Arts in 1821 and the London Mechanics' Institution in 1823, spread rapidly throughout the British Isles and the English-speaking world, reached its zenith about the middle of the nineteenth century and then slid into a long and massive decline.*
> (Whitelock 1974, p.24)

Australia was swift to join this movement with the first Mechanics Institute being established in Hobart in 1827 and the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts being established in 1833. By 1840, Newcastle, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane had all established similar institutions. The differences between the mechanics institutes and the schools of arts was not great as each gave courses of lectures and operated libraries and reading rooms.

The growing interest in science, stimulated by the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, had an important impact on the schools of arts and mechanics institutes. As Murray-Smith states:

Wherever the mechanic's institutes were formed in Australia in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, with hardly an exception the professed aims emphasised the importance of the practical application of science ... only in Brisbane where the School of Arts and Science was established in 1849, does the general need of the community for 'intellectual recreation' seem to have overshadowed any intellectual purpose. (Murray-Smith 1966a, p.77)

As the schools of arts and mechanics institutes were the main providers of adult education, so, with the introduction of subjects such as mechanical drawing, geology and chemistry, they became the first providers of technical education in Australia.

In the 1870s and 1880s, Australia experienced an enormous population and economic growth, and Victoria and New South Wales, in particular, experienced significant development, growth and diversification of secondary industries and services. However, because the effects of this growth were different in each State, so was the educational response to the need for technical education.

In New South Wales, from 1865 there was pressure for the establishment of a working men's college, to be modelled on those established in England. Although these colleges were similar to the schools of arts and the mechanics institutes in that they were self-help organisations, they were, in fact, part of a completely separate movement. The first working men's college was set up in Sheffield in 1842 and was followed by others in a number of large British towns and cities. One, in fact, formed the basis of King's College at London University. Working men's colleges did not aspire to be technical or industrial colleges but were created to be places where subjects could be taught which would have a liberalising effect on students by extending their knowledge and understanding. Such subjects might be classical, artistic or industrial subjects (Cobb 2000, p.13). The pressure in New South Wales to establish a working men's college came from both the newly formed Engineering Association of New South Wales and the Committee of the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts (Cobb 2000, p.13).

In 1875, the New South Wales Government agreed to include a sum of £2500 in the budget estimates for the establishment of the college, and, in 1878, a subsidy of £2000 was paid towards its inauguration. When the rules of the new college were formulated in 1879, its objectives were stated as being to provide 'systematic technical instruction in the sciences relating to such branches of art and industry as are capable of being successfully developed in the colony' (Mandelson 1972, p.110). By the end of 1882, the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts relinquished control of the college and the government created a Board of Technical Education to administer it. During its six years of operation, the board established workshop instruction for apprentices; established what were to become major colleges at four metropolitan and eight country locations; organised and administered a constant expansion of classes at Sydney Technical College and introduced class and course certification. Students were also entered for examinations conducted by the City of London Guilds Institute for the Advancement of Technical Education and by the Department of Science and Art in South Kensington. However, although established by the government, the board did not enjoy ministerial support and, after six years of conflict, was abolished, and responsibility for technical education passed to the Department of Public Instruction. Thus, almost from the beginning, the provision of technical education in New South Wales required government assistance in order to operate, and, as the locus of control was in Sydney, a centralised system was established to develop and co-ordinate technical education across the State.

In Victoria, there was early government involvement with the creation of a Technological Commission in 1869. However, its significance was not great as its expenditure was limited to no more than £200 per annum, and it placed almost exclusive emphasis on mechanical drawing and organised its activities around local schools of arts. It was eventually wound up in 1890. Of much greater significance were the schools of mines which developed in the 1870s and 1880s. The first of these was the Ballarat School of Mines, established in 1870, and this was followed shortly by the establishment of the Bendigo School of Mines in 1873. These schools provided courses in mining, engineering, chemistry and assaying and, later, in mathematics and writing. These were followed by other schools of mines, the establishment of the Working Men's College (which became the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) in 1882 and the Gordon College at Geelong in 1885. In all, sixteen technical institutions, all of which were

independent of government control, were created between 1870 and 1890. As Murray-Smith says:

> *the Victorian Schools of Mines were in many ways a special phenomenon: the form in which they arose was not to be found in other colonies, for they were a product of a vigorous provincial economic and cultural life not to be found elsewhere.* (Murray-Smith 1966b, p.13)

An important difference between the development of technical education in Victoria and that in other States was that substantial early development occurred outside Melbourne as a result of the rapid development of primary and secondary industries in large and prosperous regional centres, and the subsequent need for skilled labour within these centres. Again, the early decentralised structure established in the late nineteenth century has survived to the present day. Technical education in Victoria is unusual in that so many of these early colleges survived as autonomous institutions.

In South Australia, the successor to the Mechanics Institute was established by an Act of Parliament in 1856 as the South Australian Institute, managed by a board of governors and supported by a government grant. In 1878, the University of Adelaide was established, and, in the same year, a teachers' training school was set up. The first agricultural college in Australia was established at Roseworthy in 1883.

In 1886, the South Australian Government set up a Board of Enquiry into Technical Education, which led to the establishment of the School of Mines and Industries in 1889. This institution became the source of training in applied science and the trades. The college was incorporated in 1892 and became known as the South Australian Institute of Technology. During the 1890s, several small country schools of mines were also established.

Technical education in Queensland, as in New South Wales, developed directly from the mechanics institute movement. The Brisbane Technical College was established in 1882 within the Brisbane School of Arts. However, although founded early, the Brisbane Technical College operated in a vacuum for some years, as it received little more than token support from the government, industry or the community. Although the numbers of schools of arts increased between 1877 and 1894, the first technical education classes outside the Brisbane college were branch classes established at Fortitude Valley and Woolloongabba in 1886. By 1889, however, requests for technical education grants were coming in from schools of arts in country towns across the State. These continued as independent institutions until the early 1900s when the government took steps to establish a formal system of technical education in Queensland. A School of Mines was established in 1895.

In Tasmania, a Royal Commission into Education in 1883 advised a system of manual training schools, schools of domestic economy and continuation schools. Formal technical education began in Tasmania with the establishment of the Hobart and Launceston technical colleges by community committees in 1888.

In Western Australia, committees to investigate education were set up in 1888 and 1889, but their recommendations were not fully acted on. Western Australian education was placed directly in the hands of the Minister for Education in 1893, and the department's permanent director began to introduce a number of technically oriented subjects. It was not until 1900 that the first Western Australian institution, Perth Technical College, was opened.

The year 1889 can be considered to be a significant time-line in the development of technical education, as by this date most of the structures and the frameworks for future development had been established. The differences in structures and administration between States were very closely related to the economic, geographic and demographic differences between them. The schools of mines were established and survived in Victorian country towns because the skill requirements and wealth of the local economies and the size of the local populations were large enough to keep the student population viable. New South Wales had a much larger number of smaller communities spread over a much greater geographic area and the contrasts of a developing secondary industry economic base in the three major metropolitan centres of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong and a primary industry base outside these centres. The centralised system was essential for the provision of technical education in

country areas which would not have been able to support viable autonomous colleges. It is no coincidence that Queensland and Western Australia, which had similar problems of scale, both adopted a similar centralised structure.

Technical education 1890–1914

As with so many of the events which affected the development of technical education in Australia, the occurrences of the early 1900s had a long-term rather than an immediate effect. During the early 1900s, there were a series of reports on technical education. A major catalyst for these was the International Conference of Technical Education, held in London in 1897, which created a growing belief that the European technical training systems were superior to the British and, therefore, the Australian systems.

The first of the Australian inquiries was the Fink Commission, set up in Victoria in 1899 following pressure from a wide variety of interest groups that were concerned about the need to improve and expand technical education. This was followed by similar inquiries in New South Wales in 1901, Tasmania in 1904, South Australia in 1905 and Queensland in 1909. The findings of each of these were consistent and, in general terms, mentioned 'incoherent administration, lack of established aims, expediency and haphazardness and a failure to develop as a co-ordinated part of the educational and social system' (Hermann et al. 1976, p.21). All the reports argued for a coherent and progressive development of technical training from kindergarten to university and pointed out that effective, direct vocational education required the underpinning of a properly developed system of secondary education.

Although the Fink Commission was established to look at technical education, it also undertook a detailed examination of most of the activities of the Victorian Education Department. When Frank Tate became Director of Education in 1902, he proceeded to make major changes to the whole of the education system. The Education Act of 1910 empowered the Education Department to create trade schools, and trade classes were a feature of the new system of junior technical schools. These schools had been established to act as a bridge between the elementary school and the technical college. This system of technical high schools was to remain virtually unchanged until the 1980s.

The Knibbs-Turner Commission in New South Wales was established by the Minister for Education after he had received a number of delegations on the subject of educational reform, including the need to reform technical training. Knibbs and Turner submitted three massive reports, one of which was a report on Agricultural, Technical, Commercial and Domestic Education (1905). The major recommendation made by the commissioners was that there should be a unified system of education through primary, secondary and higher and technical education. The report also recommended that every branch of the Department of Public Instruction should be under an officer who would be directly responsible to the minister (Cobb 2000).

In 1912, two important royal commissions on the apprenticeship system convened in New South Wales. One of these was established to look into the question of juvenile labour and the other into apprenticeship. The reports from both commissions advocated the extension of apprenticeship and supplementary trade training. Although employers supported the idea of supplementary trade training, they did not support the idea of full-time day attendance at a technical college, a practice increasingly adopted in Europe.

These recommendations had a great influence on the Director of Education, Peter Board, and the Superintendent of Technical Education, James Nangle. In 1914, they initiated a number of major changes to the system of technical education in New South Wales. As part of these changes they

> *elevated the role of trade training to a central position, upgraded the existing diploma courses and, on the whole, let anything in between find its own level if it managed to survive in the first place.*
> (Cobb 2000, p.190)

Board believed that women should be trained and, so, he added Women's Industries to the five male-oriented sections he wished to see established at Sydney Technical College

(engineering, iron trades, science, applied art, and manufacturing trades). Any class that could not fit into these categories had to be closed. New five-year trade courses leading to a trade certificate after three years and a higher certificate of trade competency after a further two years were introduced. The daytime trade-oriented courses, introduced in 1902, were stopped. The existing colleges, with the exception of Sydney and Newcastle technical colleges, were re-named 'trade schools'. Course advisory committees were established, following complaints by employers at a conference in 1913 that many of the existing courses did not really meet the needs of their industries. These committees had both employer and employee representatives and remained a feature of the technical education system until 1986 when the advisory bodies were restructured. Other changes included the development of correspondence courses and the introduction of 'itinerant' or circuit teachers in country areas. However, the concentration on trade education to the virtual exclusion of other vocational courses, particularly commercial studies, resulted in a narrowing of opportunities for VET in New South Wales.

In South Australia, a Bill to establish secondary and technical education was introduced in 1910 but was shelved in favour of a Royal Commission into Education (1911). The recommendations of the commission in its report, tabled in 1913, included the advice that the Teachers College should be made self-sufficient, the Education Department should take over the School of Mines, apprentices should be compelled to attend technical schools during working hours for half a day each week and technical education should be available by correspondence. In 1915, a Bill embodying these recommendations was introduced in the House of Assembly, and, in 1916, the first superintendent of technical education was appointed.

Between 1900 and 1914, technical education in Queensland went through a process of changing from independent technical schools to government institutions. The major periods of change were:

- departmental involvement exerted through the endowment system (to 1902)
- establishment of the Board of Technical Education (to 1905)
- tightened departmental inspection (to 1909)
- the taking over of the Brisbane technical colleges and the absorption of all Queensland technical schools into the State system (up to 1918) (Murray-Smith 1966a)

This move to government control was a lengthy process, as the government was simultaneously establishing a system of technical education, a system of secondary schools and a university. However, by 1918, all three systems had been established and technical education was administered by the Technical Education Branch of the Department of Education.

In 1916, a Commission into Technical Education in Tasmania (the McCoy-Nangle Commission) found that

> *the existing schools had links neither with each other nor with the State education system, that their control was essentially 'irresponsible' and that they failed to command public support*
> (Murray-Smith 1966a, p.1013)

In addition, a considerable proportion of those attending them was either school children doing continuation or supplementary work, or students in commercial classes. The commissioners recommended the introduction of a completely new scheme of technical education to be achieved by the establishment of a Technical Education Branch of the Department of Education which would take over all existing technical schools. The commissioners also proposed that from primary level upwards, a new line of post-elementary schooling be introduced, side-by-side with the high schools. In 1918, a technical education branch was established, and, in January 1919, junior technical schools were introduced in connection with the technical colleges at Hobart, Launceston, Zeehan and Queenstown.

In Western Australia, technical schools were controlled by the Education Department and the schools of mines came under the control of the Mines Department. By the end of 1904,

technical schools were in existence in Perth, Fremantle and Coolgardie, as well as a School of Mines at Kalgoorlie. The absence of secondary schools and of a university until 1910 meant that technical schools in Western Australia were called on to fulfil a wide range of educational programs. The Perth Technical College was affiliated with the University of Adelaide until the University of Western Australia was established. Until 1913, the technical schools were also responsible for the conduct of evening continuation schools for the further education of girls and boys who left school at the 6th standard. Formal education for apprentices in Western Australia commenced in 1910 when the Western Australian Arbitration Court recognised that the Perth Technical College was better able than most employers to provide organised instruction for apprentices. A clause was inserted in the award to the effect that where the college could provide facilities, apprentices should attend classes and the employers should pay their fees. In 1921, a Royal Commission on the Education System in Western Australia was held, but it was not until 1940 that any sort of expansion of technical education occurred.

Although the First World War had involved State technical education systems in a Commonwealth-funded vocational training scheme, this did not give any lasting benefit to the States. The Commonwealth Government argued that it could not fund State systems for constitutional reasons, and it therefore developed a separate system which established temporary institutions which were phased out when the war finished.

By 1918, most States had reviewed their education systems, and the second major era of development of technical education was completed. These structures were to remain virtually unchanged until the 1970s.

Technical education 1920–1940

For technical education, the period from 1920 to 1930 was one of recovery from the effects of the war and the structural changes which had occurred in the previous years. The years 1930 to 1940 were dominated by the economic depression which, initially, brought technical education, like industry itself, almost to a standstill. This was followed by a period of growth, as technical education systems were used for ameliorative and welfare purposes—another illustration of the nexus between the economic base and the phases of growth of technical education. During the 1920s and 1930s, only the situation of apprentices received much attention.

There were some important reforms made to apprenticeships during this time. In 1918, New South Wales set up an apprenticeship authority to oversee both the employment and training areas of apprenticeship. This was followed by similar moves in other States, with Queensland establishing an authority in 1921 and Victoria in 1928. Although day release for trade training had been introduced in Europe in the early years of the twentieth century, it took Australia several decades to adopt this practice. Day release was introduced in South Australia in 1919, Queensland in 1924, Western Australia in 1925, Victoria in 1932 and re-introduced into New South Wales in 1943.

The need to provide trade training provided the impetus for the introduction of technical education in the Australian Capital Territory. In 1921, the first report of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee on the construction of Canberra made provision for two primary schools and a secondary school in the first phase of the development of the city. The building of a technical college was to be included in the second stage. In 1928 Telopea Park School offered a junior technical course to secondary school boys and some evening trade courses. These classes became known as the Canberra Trade School. In 1933, several of the Trade School courses were moved to premises at the site of the Kingston workshops, and this accommodation was supplemented by the transfer of some buildings from the Royal Military College at Duntroon. A Vocational Training School was established at Kingston in 1936 to assist school-leavers who were unemployed because of the Depression. In 1936, the Federal Capital Territory Apprenticeship Ordinance provided for compulsory attendance of apprentices at trade classes which assured the continuation of the Trade School. At the end of the 1930s, the Vocational Training School, the Trades School and some sheep and wool classes

became known as the Canberra Technical College. The college was formally recognised with the appointment of its first principal in 1941.

In South Australia, most technical education in the 1920s remained with the School of Mines, and the main part of the Technical Education Branch's development was confined to country technical schools and the Apprentice Trade Schools. This changed in the 1930s when the Technical Education Branch started providing a network of senior technical classes in the metropolitan area.

In Victoria, during the 1920s and 1930s, there was conflict between those who favoured central control and educational integration and those who favoured the continuation of a separate identity and autonomous functioning of the technical system. It was not until the war and early post-war years that many of the independent institutions took the initiative to become part of the Education Department. By 1959, only the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Swinburne, Prahran, Ballarat, Bendigo and Gordon Colleges remained outside the Education Department.

In 1933, the New South Wales Minister for Education, David Drummond, established a Technical Education Commission to inquire into the State's technical education system. Its report, presented in 1935, was comprehensive and made both general and specific recommendations. The commissioners found that technical education was both under-valued and under-financed, that teachers were resentful and conditions were bad. Major recommendations were that the proportion of total expenditure for technical education should be increased, all technical institutions should be known as technical colleges rather than trade schools, Sydney Technical College should be re-named the Royal Technical College, Sydney, consideration should be given to the establishment of travelling workshops and advisory committees should be established for each country college. As well, the report made detailed recommendations about individual courses, teaching methods, recruitment and training of teachers and fees and bursaries.

Following the release of the report, the term 'trade school' immediately disappeared, additional courses were established in country areas, the first of the railway mobile teaching units was fitted out and sent to service country towns where no trade training facilities existed. Many of the specific recommendations about course provision were also implemented. However, Sydney Technical College did not change its name.

Apart from these changes, conditions for technical education in Australia showed little improvement. As Robinson points out, the position of technical education over the period 1920 to 1970, was invidious as:

> *The systems were part of the education departments dominated by the financial needs of compulsory schooling. In 1920, for instance, technical education in New South Wales received seven per cent of the State education budget although its cost per student would have been higher than for primary or secondary students because its essence is small group training using equipment of workplace standard.* (Robinson 1990, p.21)

After an initial lull, the economic depression of the 1930s was a period of growth for technical education as it was used in most States to deliver programs designed to alleviate the high level of unemployment. For example, in 1932, the New South Wales Government amended the Industrial Arbitration Act to introduce a new category of trainee apprentices, known unofficially as learners, because employers were unwilling to take on indentured apprentices in the depth of the Depression. These emergency classes put great strains on the systems and led to David Drummond, Minister for Education in New South Wales, calling a meeting of ministers in 1936 to discuss the need for Commonwealth financial assistance for technical education.

At this meeting, Drummond provided a lengthy statement in which he outlined:

> *the parlous state of technical education in New South Wales, how this came at a critical stage in the need for industrial revival and youth training to overcome the unemployment of the 1930s, and how New South Wales and other States could not find funds from their own sources.*
>
> (Spaull 1987, p.8)

The other ministers responded positively to Drummond's request for support and unanimously carried the motion submitted by the chairman:

> *That this Conference approach the Commonwealth with a request that it should, in the interests of Australia's progress and prosperity, the employment of youth and adequate defence, agree to make a substantial capital grant to the States for the thorough re-organisation and equipment of technical education, to be determined after consultation, and in addition, an annual grant to enable the States to retain the system so re-organised, in a high state of efficiency.* (Spaull 1987, p.10)

This motion was rejected by the Commonwealth at the Premiers Conference in May 1936, and it was not until the 1940s, when technical education had become a vital part of the war effort, that the Commonwealth provided financial assistance to the States for technical education. Although the meeting might have failed to achieve Drummond's objective of gaining financial support for technical education, it was of historical interest because it represented the inaugural meeting of the Australian Education Council (AEC).

Technical education 1940–1970

During the Second World War there were two main manpower training schemes created. The first of these was the Technical Training Scheme, introduced in 1941 to train workers in skills needed for the war effort. As part of this scheme, grants were made to technical colleges and universities, and funds were provided for new equipment. The second was the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS) which was set up in 1944 to provide full- or part-time training in skilled trades or in secondary or post-secondary courses, so that ex-servicemen and women could improve their civilian job opportunities. Although the CRTS involved both universities and technical colleges, the great majority of trainees attended technical colleges. The costs of the defence and civilian training and the CRTS were met by the Commonwealth as part of training arrangements negotiated with the States. Although tuition fees and living allowances took a large proportion of the funds, technical colleges did gain new buildings and equipment.

The end of the war saw moves inside New South Wales to reform technical education. When R J Heffron became Minister for Education in 1945, he immediately set about improving the operation and status of technical education as:

> *the greatly increased size and complexity of technical education, its high standards and the need for continuous and close association with industry are factors which add considerably to the difficulty of administration. This difficulty is further increased by the fact that the provision and conduct of technical education is a matter which affects the welfare of the whole State and planning must be done on a statewide basis.* (Cobb 2000, p.358)

With the promulgation of the New South Wales Technical Education Act of 1949, the Technical Education Branch became a separate department, with a director-general who reported directly to the minister. The Act also established the University of Technology (later the University of New South Wales) and transferred all diploma courses to the new institution. It was not until the early 1960s that the department started offering these courses again, only to have the sequence of events repeated with the establishment of the New South Wales Institute of Technology.

The post-war decades saw great changes in Australian society. There was a rapid growth in population as a result of migration with a matching economic growth. An expansion of industry (particularly tertiary industry) and commerce, combined with higher standards of living, produced an increased demand for tertiary education, higher levels of educational

qualifications and a need for different types of qualifications. Up to the Second World War, the needs of apprenticeship and trade occupations had dominated technical education. However, the expansion of industry following the war led to the introduction of a whole new occupational category, that of technician or para-professional occupations. Courses to meet these occupational needs became the fastest growing area of technical education.

The 1950s and 1960s were therefore periods of growth for technical education, but, although funding had improved in some States, it still did not match the growth in the system which still had to cope with inadequate facilities and equipment.

Commonwealth Government intervention in education to 1970

In 1901, the Australian Constitution provided a formal division of powers between the Commonwealth and the States. The Commonwealth powers were set out in considerable detail whilst the States retained 'residual powers'. Federation gave the Commonwealth Government no direct role in education, which continued to be accepted as a State responsibility. When New South Wales transferred land to the Commonwealth in 1911 for the establishment of the Australian Capital Territory, the New South Wales Government agreed to be responsible for education in the Territory. It was not until the 1920s that the Commonwealth started having some involvement in the provision of education in the Australian Capital Territory.

As a result of the constitution's division of powers and subsequent legal and policy interpretations of these, there has been a marked difference in the powers to spend and the powers to tax at the Commonwealth and State levels. The Commonwealth has normally had surplus revenue-raising capacity, while the States have had spending responsibilities above their revenue-raising ability.

As Don Smart (1982) points out, during the post-war years, Australia experienced a remarkable growth of federal activity and involvement in many areas, one of the most significant of which was education. The major factors contributing to the increase in Commonwealth intervention have been High Court decisions and economic factors which permitted the development of Commonwealth financial dominance over the States. The most important factor, however, was the passing of the Uniform Taxation Act of 1942, which was imposed upon the States as a temporary measure during the war, but which has resulted in the entrenchment of the Commonwealth Government in a position of financial supremacy. This has had a particular impact on education as, although the States had the responsibility for the provision of education, they had insufficient funds to be able to meet the increasing demands for school, higher and technical education in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1943, on the initiative of the Minister for War Organisation of Industry, the Commonwealth Government established the Walker committee to 'consider the general problem of the co-ordination of the various activities of the Commonwealth within the education field' (Tannock 1976, p.4). This committee played a very important role in education as it began the Commonwealth's deliberate move into the long-established area of State responsibility for education. The committee's final report analysed the relations between the Commonwealth and the States on educational matters and concluded that the Commonwealth had a definite responsibility to provide facilities that were essential for the accomplishment of its own tasks, if these facilities could not be readily provided by the States. The report suggested that the main Commonwealth interests in educational developments in the States would be in the re-establishment of armed forces personnel; education for industrial development and rural industries; scientific education and training of research workers; health; adult education; and equality of educational opportunity through the payment of allowances to students. The main conclusion of the committee was that there was an urgent need for the establishment of permanent machinery for the development and execution of Commonwealth education policy.

By 1949, the Commonwealth had implemented a number of the Walker committee's recommendations. The Commonwealth Office of Education was created within the

framework of the Department of Post-war Reconstruction on 8 November 1945. The functions of the office in terms of the Education Act 1945 were to advise the minister on matters relating to education, including the granting of financial assistance to the States; to liaise on educational matters with the States and overseas; to undertake research and to provide statistics and information. As well, the Universities Commission had been created, the Australian National University had been established and the post-war educational program for returned servicemen and women had been developed and implemented. However, although the war years saw the Commonwealth Government start to take an active role in education through these initiatives, its interest in technical education virtually died at the end of the war.

An important change was the amendment to the constitution to enable the Commonwealth to legislate for the benefit of students and the wartime financial assistance for university students had been extended. In 1943, the Commonwealth had introduced the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Scheme which provided assistance to university students. In 1944, this assistance was extended to selected students at technical colleges. Following the 1946 change to the constitution, the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme for university students was introduced in 1951. It was not until 1965 that the Commonwealth Technical Scholarship Scheme was introduced and that, for the first time, Commonwealth financial assistance was made available to technical education students. In general, these scholarships provided assistance at certificate level and could be taken on a part-time or a full-time basis at a variety of institutions. Selection was based solely on merit. The benefits were the same as those provided under the Commonwealth Secondary Scholarship Scheme and were considerably less than the benefits provided under the Commonwealth University and, later, the Advanced Education Scholarship Schemes.

The Walker committee, therefore, had a considerable influence on education in Australia, although:

> *the immediate legislative outcomes were probably far less important in determining the future development of Australian education than the change of attitude towards education which its activities wrought within the Commonwealth.* (DEET 1988, p.27)

In 1956, the Commonwealth Government appointed a committee to investigate the problems of Australian universities. The committee, chaired by K A Murray, reported back in September 1957. Although the committee's main concern was universities, it also looked at the relationship between universities and technical education and recommended that professional training should be the function of the universities and all forms of non-professional training should be the function of the technical colleges.

Although the financial situation of universities improved following the Murray report recommendations, the technical colleges and teachers colleges were in dire financial straits. In 1961, the Prime Minister, R G Menzies, appointed a Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, chaired by L H Martin, 'to consider the pattern of tertiary education in relation to the needs and resources of Australia' and to make recommendations to the Australian Universities Commission on the future development of tertiary education. The Martin committee recommended that Australia should have a greater diversity of tertiary institutions and recommended three categories: universities, institutes of colleges and boards of teacher education. The institutes of colleges, which were intended to reform technical education, were aimed at the top end of technical education and were envisaged as being groups of existing technical colleges with revised structures and functions.

As Treyvaud pointed out in his book *Equal but cheaper*, 'the States followed the lead of the Commonwealth with varying degrees of comprehension' (1976, p.9). Victoria anticipated the recommendations by announcing the establishment of the Victorian Institute of Colleges even before the Martin report was released. By December 1965, seven institutions affiliated with the institute and were later joined by four others. Affiliating colleges included technical education as well as advanced education components. In New South Wales, separate boards were set up for universities, advanced education and teacher education, with an overall co-ordinating board. Queensland established three new colleges and followed this by establishing a Board

of Advanced Education to co-ordinate these and other special purpose colleges. Western Australia established a new Institute and a Tertiary Education Commission to oversee all tertiary education in the State. South Australia eventually set up a board to oversee non-university education, and Tasmania incorporated its teachers colleges, technical and special purpose colleges in Hobart and Launceston in a new College of Advanced Education under a Council of Advanced Education.

The acceptance of the recommendations by the Commonwealth Government led to the emergence of a new type of educational institution, the College of Advanced Education (CAE). The main reason for establishing this new sector of education was to enable higher education to absorb a continuing increase in the numbers of students without a corresponding drain on national funds (Treyvaud 1976, p.66). The CAEs were seen to be cheaper than universities. Apart from taking over the diploma courses from those States which offered them through technical colleges and changing college structures in Victoria, the creation of the new sector did not have a significant effect on demand for technical education.

In 1972, there was an agreement that teacher education should be included in Commonwealth financial provision, and those States which had not already done so brought them within the responsibilities of their advanced education boards. This funding came into effect in 1973, when the funding of both CAEs and universities was taken over by the Commonwealth. These changes meant that in the early 1970s, technical education was the only sector of tertiary education not formally receiving Commonwealth financial assistance.

However, almost by mistake, technical education did receive some capital grants in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In his 1963 election speech, the prime minister announced that an equal number of secondary and technical scholarships would be awarded, and £5 million would be paid annually for science blocks in secondary schools and the same amount for buildings and equipment in technical schools. Although a strong system of secondary technical schools existed in Victoria, in most other States technical high schools had been subsumed into comprehensive schools. Therefore, in those States which did not have technical schools, departmental officers translated the scholarships and building grants into scholarships and grants for technical colleges. The first of these 'windfall' grants was made in 1965, and a total of $116 million was paid between 1965 and 1975 (Robinson 1990, p.27).

As Smart points out, in the 1950s to 1970s, there was a hierarchical pattern of the Commonwealth's entry into involvement in education and the use of committees of inquiry and advisory committees to facilitate it (Smart 1982). Thus, intervention began at the top of the pyramid with the Murray report on universities and the creation of the Universities Commission. This was followed by the Martin report which led to the creation of CAEs and the Commission of Advanced Education and the Karmel report (1973) which led to the establishment of the Schools Commission. Unfortunately for technical education, it did not appear to be considered to be part of the education sector until increasing pressure in the early 1970s forced the Labor Government to establish a committee to look at its funding needs.

3 The Whitlam years 1972–1975

Australia in the early 1970s

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were a number of significant economic and social changes which led to a radical political change that had a dramatic effect on TAFE. During the 1950s and 1960s, Australia was 'what it had always been—a dependent capitalist economy with income levels that geography had decided would be among the highest in the world' (Catley 1981, p.90). During this period, the Menzies Coalition Government stood on two basic policy planks, economic growth and anti-communism. As Catley points out, the basis for the long post-war boom was laid under American auspices during the period of post-war reconstruction. This was the result of the establishment of freer world trade in commodities and capital. During the 1960s, there was a boom period, marked by the inflow of foreign capital. Some of this was deposited for speculative purposes in the belief that the Australian currency was temporarily undervalued. The part of the inflow that had augmented the private capital stock had increasingly been directed into new mining ventures in Western Australia and Queensland. This meant the most dynamic and profitable areas of the economy were now largely foreign owned. This inflow of foreign capital undoubtedly contributed to the onset of inflation in 1970–71. The economy was also affected by the government's loss of control over wage fixation in 1969 and the increasing questioning of the tariff system. Between 1969 and 1971, there was an accelerated rate of inflation, a rise in import prices and an increase in unemployment.

There were also significant changes to the labour force during this period. The immigration policy of the 1950s and 1960s led to a substantial increase in the country's net gains of immigrants, particularly those who were assisted in their passage to Australia because they possessed skills that were in short supply. In the 1960s, the numbers of new participants to the labour force increased as those born in the post-war baby boom came of working age. During the late 1960s, the number of women in the labour force also increased. This meant that the rate of growth in the labour force was considerably higher than the rate of growth of the total population.

The 1960s and early 1970s were also years of great social change in Australia, with a new social ideology developing as a multiplicity of social groups sought equality of status. The Vietnam moratorium movement was an 'instructive model for protest for a large number of un-appreciated Australians, among them Aborigines, women's groups, ecologists and those previously lacking an outlet for their grievances' (Bolton 1990, p.173). It was therefore not surprising that the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the emergence of alternative movements. The formation of a Homosexual Reform Society and women's liberation groups in 1969 were indicative of the new forces emerging within society that were changing traditional attitudes and mores. These changes in attitudes fostered an increase in concern for specific groups within the community, and new groups, such as Aborigines and ethnic groups, were recognised as suffering from disadvantage. There was therefore pressure on education systems to reflect the new ideologies. In 1969, the National Union of Australian University Students launched a campaign aimed at making the existence of inequalities in education a public issue, and to further this campaign, their education officer, Tom Roper, wrote *The myth of equality* in which he identified no less than ten groups suffering from inequalities.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the political situation was stagnant as the Coalition Government had been in office for a long time and did not appear to be adjusting to the changing economic and social environment. It was within this context of increasing economic problems, growth in the labour force and changing community attitudes that the Labor Party came to power in

1972, and its political platform, particularly its educational policies, reflected the economic and social attitudes of the day. The first priority of the new government was social justice.

Pressures for change to technical education

By the beginning of the 1970s, pressure for improved financial provision for technical education was growing. During the 1960s, the Commonwealth had progressively become involved in funding of schools and higher education. Technical education was increasingly being recognised as the 'cinderella' of education, and the time was ripe for change. The advent of the Labor Government in 1972 was the beginning of two decades of change.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the AEC made a number of calls for Commonwealth financial assistance for technical education. However, these were superseded by moves to gain financial assistance in schools.

New South Wales continued to press for assistance for technical education and, in 1961, it prepared a statement on the conditions and needs, which it claimed was representative of the Australian experience. The statement and supporting arguments were forwarded to the prime minister. He in turn submitted it to the Martin committee for consideration. Although, initially, this statement did not have the imprimatur of the AEC, it did become the operational basis for *The case for Commonwealth aid to technical education*, prepared by the AEC in 1963–64 (Spaull 1987, p.122).

The release of the Martin report in 1965 effectively concluded attempts by the AEC to obtain Commonwealth financial support for technical education, although concern was expressed by the AEC to State premiers that:

> *the definition of tertiary education employed by the Commonwealth excludes from consideration technician or certificate courses which have entry requirements below the completion of high school but which advance into tertiary level. In view of the vital necessity to increase the number of technicians in the community, the Commonwealth is requested to give further consideration to providing matching funds on recurrent expenditure for those parts of courses which are beyond the completion of a full high school course, even though entry is made at an earlier stage.*
>
> (Spaull 1987, p.150)

The other major lobby groups at the national level during the 1960s were the Australian Teacher's Federation (ATF) and the Technical and Further Education Teachers' Association of Australia (TAFETAA). From the time of its establishment in 1964, TAFETAA had taken annual requests to the Commonwealth Government for a national inquiry into technical education. Successive Liberal Government ministers for education responded to these requests by restating the Liberal Party policy which was that the primary responsibility for education rests with the States. This view was in direct contrast to the Labor Party view that the Commonwealth Government had a central role to play in education. However, despite the Labor Party's platform to improve education, technical education initially received only cursory attention.

A report that also added to the pressure for change in technical education was the report of the Australian Tripartite Mission to study methods of training skilled workers in Europe (the Tregellis report) (1969). The main purpose of the tripartite mission was to investigate the methods of training skilled workers in Europe in order to provide a basis for revising the criteria for the selection overseas and the recognition in Australia of migrant tradesmen coming within the scope of the 'Tradesmen's Rights Regulation Act'. However, the mission's report did make a number of recommendations for improving training within Australia. The report warned against relying on migration to overcome the shortage of skilled labour and the need to take steps within Australia to update training methods. The report also pointed out that of all the advanced industrialised countries, Australia remained the only country where there was no general co-ordination of training on a national basis to ensure a uniformity of training methods, a uniformity of standards and a common acceptance of qualifications. It suggested there was a need for increased funding for industrial training as the provision of

adequate vocational training was extremely costly and, in Australia, the amounts devoted to technical education were small compared to the expenditure on general and tertiary education. It also stated that the system of technical teacher training should be given more attention. Following the release of the report, the Ministers of Labour Conference (MOLAC) supported increased Commonwealth involvement in the financing of technical education and noted the small amount spent by both the Commonwealth and the States on technical education as compared to the amount spent on the other sectors of education.

When the Labor Party came to power in 1972, it moved quickly to establish advisory commissions for pre-schooling (the Children's Commission) and primary and secondary education (the Australian Schools Commission). The establishment of these commissions drew the attention of the new Minister for Education, Kim Beazley, to the fact that there were 400 000 students who would not come under the jurisdiction of the Schools Commission or the Commission on Advanced Education or the Universities Commission.

In 1973, following this discovery, there were a number of factors which concentrated the government's attention on technical education. In January 1973, the TAFETAA held its annual conference in Adelaide and resolved once again to request the Commonwealth Government to hold a national inquiry into technical education. Following the TAFETAA Conference, a delegation met with Mr Beazley, and this proved to be the catalyst for the Labor Government to mount a formal inquiry into technical education. This decision was strongly supported by the Minister for Labour and Immigration, Clyde Cameron, who believed that there was a need for a Commission on Technical and Further Education to enable the technical education systems to play a greater role in the creation and upgrading of the labour force. It was Clyde Cameron who nominated Myer Kangan, then deputy secretary of his department, to head the national inquiry.

It has been said that the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACOTAFE) 'arose by default' (Matthews 1975), as was demonstrated by the nature of the committee's brief, which was, in effect, to pick up the loose ends of education not covered by the other commissions. However, although it had taken a long time for technical education to have government attention focussed on it, and although the processes for achieving this may have been long drawn out and disjointed, the establishment of ACOTAFE marked the start of twenty years of dramatic change.

The Kangan committee

The appointment of ACOTAFE was announced by the Commonwealth Minister for Education on 26 April 1973. The committee was to be chaired by Myer Kangan, and the ten other members included representatives from business, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), State technical education systems and higher education. The terms of reference of the committee read as follows:

> *The committee will furnish information and advice to the Minister for Education on matters relating to the development of technical and further education in Australia including financial assistance to the States in relation to institutions in the States. That information and advice will include:*
>
> *(a) priorities within needs and appropriate measures to be undertaken by the Australian Government*
>
> *(b) the amount and allocation of financial assistance*
>
> *(c) the conditions upon which assistance should be granted*
>
> *In carrying out its task the committee will take into account:*
>
> *(a) the promotion of the vigorous and well balanced development of technical and further education throughout Australia*
>
> *(b) overall manpower policy and national and local occupational requirements*
>
> *(c) the emerging needs of industry, commerce and governments as they adjust to technological, economic and social change*

(d) *community attitudes and the needs and aspirations of individuals seeking to undertake courses in technical and further education*

(e) *the optimum use of resources*

For the purposes of the committee, technical and further education is defined as the post-school education (other than that conducted by institutions supported by the Australian Universities Commission and the Australian Commission on Advanced Education) conducted by institutions administered or maintained by a government education authority. The committee will not be concerned with grants for training within industry.

The very broad definition of TAFE and the wide ambit of the terms of reference permitted the committee to create its own boundaries and set its own agendas. An important part of the Labor Party platform of 1971 had been to promote equality, by which was meant 'equality of opportunity', particularly in education, health and welfare. This aim was reflected in the terms of reference and was seen as a major part of the committee's brief.

ACOTAFE held its first meeting on 25 May 1973 and subsequently met twelve times in full committee. There were a number of visits to the States, and a comprehensive survey of technical college institutions was undertaken. This was of particular importance as it was the first time that a national profile of TAFE had been attempted. This profile not only provided an invaluable overview of the sector but also set a benchmark against which later developments and achievements could be measured.

The results of the survey and the documentation of both the structure and scope of TAFE revealed not only the diversity of structures and size of the system, but also revealed the poverty of the system and the lack of adequate student support services, particularly in the areas of student counselling and library services. The survey and submissions to the committee also highlighted the lack of formal arrangements at national level, particularly for exchange of manpower planning information and national standards for course accreditation.

ACOTAFE recommendations

On 5 April 1974, ACOTAFE presented a two-volume report to the minister for education. In presenting its conclusions and recommendations, ACOTAFE also provided a definition of TAFE. This was that:

> *technical and further education should be regarded as describing all organised and sustained programs designed to communicate vocationally oriented knowledge and to develop the individual's understanding and skills. It should include all programs of education with a vocational purpose, other than those financially supported by other Commissions, whether the individual is using the program with employment as a primary aim or with the aim of gaining specialised knowledge or skills for personal enrichment or job improvement. It includes what is usually known as 'adult education'. It does not include activities which have no direct educational purpose and which are not planned as a systematic sequence.* (ACOTAFE 1974, p.v)

The report pointed out that TAFE had too often been thought of as something different from a tidy mainstream of education—primary, secondary and tertiary—and should be regarded as an alternative, neither inferior nor superior, to the other streams of education.

The recommendations in the report were based on the premise that TAFEC would be established similar to the universities, advanced education and schools commissions and therefore were framed in terms of what actions should be undertaken by the new commission. The report recommended a shift in emphasis from that of seeing the prime purpose of technical education as being to anticipate and meet the vocational needs of the community to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Unesco and Organisation of Economic Co-operation (OECD) views of meeting:

> *the needs of the individual person who wishes, within the limits of his capacity, to develop his ability to the best advantage of himself and the community, including industry and commerce* (ACOTAFE 1974, p.9)

The report stressed that this was only a shift in emphasis, and the realities of job opportunities, the continuing expanding demand for skilled manpower and the relevance of courses to the actual content of occupations must, nevertheless, remain the context for the type of education offered in technical colleges. The concept of recurrent education was seen as an important component of this process as it

> *offers the best hope whereby the community can cope with shifting job specifications resulting from technological and social change and especially with new employment opportunities which open up.*
> (ACOTAFE 1974, p.22)

The other major theme was that of access to TAFE. Although acknowledging that access to technical education was less difficult than to many other forms of post-school education because of the wide range of courses, entry requirements and attendance patterns, the report stated that there were still a number of barriers to access. Therefore, it was recommended that strong emphasis should be placed on unrestricted access to recurrent education and colleges should extend preparatory courses, transfer courses and other help to allow adults to attempt the level of vocational education they desired. Groups that were identified as being particularly disadvantaged and requiring specific assistance were women, Aborigines, those who resided outside metropolitan areas and the disabled.

The report also drew attention to the physical facilities in many colleges which recalled outmoded attitudes in industry and the consequences of years of insufficient finances which had left colleges unable to provide adequately for the growing demand for class accommodation and for back-up resources essential for planning future development and keeping existing educational facilities up to date. These facilities referred not just to physical facilities but also to course content, libraries, research and in-service education for staff.

The detailed recommendations of the committee related mainly to grants to be made by the Commonwealth Government to the States for both recurrent expenditure and capital works which would be channelled through the commission to the States. As fees had been abolished, it was proposed that $20 million should be available for distribution among the States as fees reimbursement grants. It was also recommended that $9.8 million should be made available for distribution among the States as a general-purpose recurrent expenditure grant and a further $9.8 million should be available as specific purpose grants. These included special purpose grants for:

- curriculum research and development
- training of specialist staff for libraries, library resource materials and equipment
- publicity measures to raise public awareness of TAFE
- counselling services
- the establishment of units to undertake capital works planning and statistical collections
- grants to develop facilities to further the concept of recurrent education and unrestricted access to vocationally oriented education

Particular attention was given to the establishment of Library Resource Centres, and it was also recommended that an Australian TAFE Technology Centre be established for the purposes of adapting technology to vocational education and of researching, developing and producing learning and other educational aids. This latter was one of the few recommendations that were not implemented at this time. It took another eight years and two reports before a National TAFE Centre for Research and Development was established.

A major emphasis of the report was the need for grants for capital purposes. The committee estimated that a total capital expenditure of $1000 million was required to do all that needed to be done by the end of the 1980s to give TAFE the status it should have and bring it within access of all who could benefit. The report also stated that whatever limitation the existing economic situation placed on funds for education should be shared by other streams of education, and priority for expenditure should not be less than that accorded universities, CAEs and schools. The capital grants proposed were both matched and unmatched grants for equipment and minor works, land and buildings, student residentials and library resources

centres. Although the grants that were approved were less than those proposed, they were sufficient to transform TAFE.

In line with a recommendation that the Australian Commission on Advanced Education and the proposed ACOTAFE arrange a special inquiry into initial teacher education, a Committee on Technical Teacher Education (COTTE) was jointly established by the two commissions. It made a number of recommendations on measures to improve technical teacher education but, like a number of other reports delivered in 1975, was shelved due to changing economic circumstances. However, in 1976 TAFEC commissioned another investigation into TAFE teacher education. This is discussed in the following chapter.

The Kangan committee's report was tabled in Parliament on 10 April 1974. The Minister for Education, Mr Beazley, summed it up in his tabling speech as follows:

> *The report envisages a major shift of emphasis. It abandons the narrow and rigid concept that technical colleges exist simply to meet the manpower needs of industry, and adopts a broader concept that they exist to meet the needs of people as individuals . . . The report takes a long step in the direction of lifelong education and of opportunities for re-entry to education. It recommends unrestricted access for adults to vocationally oriented education.* (Beazley 1980, p.48)

The release of the report was followed by the double dissolution of Parliament in May 1974, and no decisions were announced until September 1974. The recommendations for funding were cut; particularly the capital works proposals. Although the States Grants (Technical and Further Education) Act 1974 was supposed to operate from 1 June 1974, in practice, the enabling legislation was not carried until nearly six months later. The second ACOTAFE report was released in May 1975 and recommended Commonwealth grants in the order of $493 million, of which $282 million was for capital works purposes. It also proposed a development program for the next decade. Unfortunately, the release of this report coincided with the onset of an economic recession and the competing demands for funds from the other Commissions and, so, its recommendations were never implemented. The Technical and Further Education Act was assented to in May 1975 and this Act provided for TAFEC. This was chaired by Mr H K Coughlan with Professor E Richardson as deputy (both full-time members) and ten part-time members.

Although Myer Kangan was supposed to be replaced in his department, the appointment of his successor was delayed, and for some months he was not only chairing the committee but also still carrying out the duties of deputy secretary. According to Peter Fleming, a member of ACOTAFE, TAFEC and the TAFE Council of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC), Myer Kangan was always able to keep the big picture in view, always knew exactly where he was going and always had the framework of the report in his head. It was unfortunate that the pressures of the inquiry led to ill health and that he was unable to participate in the preparation of the second report.

The significance of the Kangan report should not be underestimated. For the first time technical education, under its new name TAFE, was given a status and a charter which gave it a recognised place within the education sector. Although in recent years the Kangan philosophy has been criticised as being no longer relevant, the Kangan definition still has not been replaced by anything better. As Ryan points out, the Kangan report also provided TAFE with an ideology:

> *one which dismissed crude distinctions between technical and humane studies, discounted a narrow vocationalism as TAFE's sole charter, asserted its equality of esteem with other educational sectors as well as its distinctive character and especially stressed the role of TAFE in providing access by all to post-secondary education.* (Ryan 1982, p.9)

The acceptance of the report also gave TAFE access to Commonwealth funds for both recurrent purposes and for capital works. The transformation of TAFE would not have been possible without the influx of Commonwealth funding for new buildings, staff development, libraries, curriculum development and research.

Last, but certainly not least, the Kangan report provided the impetus for the development of a national identity for TAFE and put TAFE on the national agenda. Although TAFE remained

the responsibility of State Governments, the injection of Commonwealth funding and the establishment of national bodies such as ACOTAFE led to the development of national TAFE policies and standards.

The significance of the Whitlam years for TAFE

For Gough Whitlam, the most enduring single achievement of [his] government was the transformation of education in Australia. He saw education as the great instrument for the promotion of equality and he and his government were well aware that Australia had fallen behind many other countries in the proportion of Gross National Product spent on education. The first task of the interim Schools Commission, established in December 1972, was to chart the inequalities in the Australian education system. Its report confirmed that children of Aborigines, migrants and the working class in general stood less chance than the rest of the community of enjoying schooling of a quality which would equalise their opportunities in life. In order to redress this situation, the Schools Commission was given a mandate for remedial action.

Two measures introduced to help overcome inequality of opportunity were the abolition of fees and the replacement of competitive schemes of tertiary scholarships by non-competitive means-tested grants. Both these initiatives had a considerable impact on TAFE, not just in increasing participation levels but also affecting the characteristics of the student population. The new student assistance scheme was initially known as the Tertiary Allowances Scheme, and with the passing of the Student Assistance Act of 1973, was changed to the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS). These means-tested grants were available to all university and advanced education students and to TAFE students who were enrolled in approved courses. In 1975, another scheme, the Adult Secondary Education Allowance Scheme (ASEAS), was introduced to provide grants, similar to TEAS, to mature students undertaking full-time matriculation courses. To be eligible, students had to be nineteen years of age or older and to have had a substantial break from secondary schooling. However, although TEAS was an improvement for TAFE students, it still did not provide equality with university and advanced education students. There were certain categories of TAFE full-time students who were specifically excluded (e.g. those in the stream 5 classification of preparatory courses), and the incidentals allowance for textbooks and other course materials was much lower for TAFE students than for other tertiary students. However, despite this anomaly, both the abolition of fees and the introduction of the new student assistance schemes supported the Kangan report recommendations for improving access to tertiary education and expanding the provision of full-time courses in TAFE by removing financial barriers to access. The effects of these can be seen in the increase in TAFE enrolments from 400 700 in 1973 to 671 013 in 1975, a fifty-nine per cent increase.

In line with its policy of improving education, the Labor Government divided the Department of Education and Science into two separate departments and extended their roles. The education policy and program functions for which the new Department of Education became responsible included administering student assistance programs, education research and information services, Aboriginal education, migrant education, international education activities, education in the Australian Capital Territory and administering the Northern Territory education system. A migrant education branch of the department was created in 1975, following the transfer of functions from the former Department of Immigration. Between 1973 and the end of 1975, departmental staff had increased from 1795 to 7957 positions (including those in State offices), which gives an indication of the expanding role of the Commonwealth in Australian education.

Another new initiative was the establishment of a National Training Council (NTC) in 1973. This replaced the former national steering committee on training for industry and commerce. Tripartite (government, union and employer) industry training committees were progressively established under the NTC to cover particular industry sectors, with the objective of developing systematic training practices within those industries.

In 1973, Clyde Cameron appointed a Committee of Inquiry Into Labour Market Training (chaired by Mr D Cochrane) to report to the minister on:

- the role that training should play in an active manpower policy
- the extent to which opportunities for training and retraining should be provided or improved
- the broad methods of training and retraining that should be used
- the rationalisation of existing schemes of training and retraining

The committee reported back in May 1974, a month after the Kangan report. It's main recommendations were for the introduction of procedures for collecting labour market information and rationalisation of labour market training assistance through the establishment of one comprehensive labour market training scheme. It also proposed the introduction of group apprenticeship schemes, the development of measures to overcome the restrictions preventing the access of adults to the skilled trades and the optimisation of utilisation of the facilities of existing educational institutions.

Although little mention is made of TAFE in the report, possibly because the committee was working concurrently with the Kangan committee, there was consistency in both reports in the need to improve labour force skills, the need for improved labour market information and planning and the need to provide assistance to disadvantaged groups within the community. The Cochrane report also led to the introduction of the National Employment and Training Scheme (NEAT). Under this scheme, assistance was provided to eligible trainees undertaking on-the-job, full-time or part-time training for skills in demand on the labour market. Employers providing on-the-job training received subsidies equal to 37.5 per cent of the adult award wage or 27.5 per cent for junior trainees. At approximately the same time, the National Apprentice Assistance Scheme (NAAS) was introduced to rationalise and extend the provisions for trade training. A major objective was to increase the flow of apprentices by providing subsidies to employers willing to take on additional apprentices. These developments were complemented by the establishment of the Regional Employment Development (RED) scheme in 1974, which was designed to encourage locally initiated labour intensive projects of a socially useful or economically viable nature in areas of high unemployment.

The Labor Government also instigated searches for alternative avenues to higher education and was very interested in the British Open University. A committee was established under the auspices of the Universities Commission to look at the feasibility of establishing an open university in Australia. However, the commission instead recommended that a non-teaching Open Tertiary Education body be established. This project was abandoned as financial problems were becoming increasingly evident, and projections from the Borrie report on population suggested that existing institutions would have difficulty maintaining their levels of enrolment.

Another report which had a considerable impact on TAFE, although not specifically directed at it, was the Schools Commission report, *Girls, school and society*. This study was undertaken as:

> *The position of women in Australian society and the influence of education in perpetuating or challenging their inferior status have become important issues in Australia . . . The questions now being raised are both broader and more fundamental than those about length of schooling and subject and occupational choice which were the preoccupation of the few studies relating to the education of girls in the past. They include such matters but go beyond them to social arrangements and differing perceptions of possibilities among boys and girls, and how those arrangements and perceptions arise.* (Schools Commission 1975, p.1)

The report pointed out that less than one-third of students studying for qualifications at post-school level were female and that there was a disparity between the sexes in participation in industrial and technical training. This type of training strongly attracted boys who left school before completing a full secondary course. Girls were more likely to drop out of schooling altogether. It was also pointed out that despite their greatly increased participation in paid

work, women workers remained strongly concentrated in traditional female occupations and that educational opportunities for women re-entering the workforce were still very limited. Although the recommendations in the report were directed at the school system, TAFE systems took note and great emphasis was placed on increasing participation of women in TAFE courses and in trying to encourage women into non-traditional occupational areas.

Other social changes which also impacted indirectly on educational systems were the progress made on removing discriminatory practices against women, the major shift in policy towards multiculturalism and moves to improve the lot of Aboriginal communities. The major reforms made regarding women were the appointment of a special adviser on women's affairs, the removal by State and federal public services of discriminatory practices against women and the granting of the full adult minimum wage to women in May 1974. The concept of multiculturalism was assisted by the improvement of facilities for the schooling of migrant children and the establishment of ethnic radio stations in Sydney and Melbourne. The aim of the Labor Party's Aboriginal policy was

> *to restore to the Aboriginal people of Australia their lost power of self-determination in economic, social and political affairs [so that they could take up] as a distinctive and honoured component in the Australian society the position to which their rights as the first Australians entitled them.*
>
> (Whitlam 1973)

Many changes were carried out in health, education, housing and other spheres of Aboriginal life. For example, Aboriginal employment and training assistance was expanded, and between 1973 and 1974, the number of full-time specialists in the area in the Department of Labour more than doubled to nearly 100. However, although the reforms resulted in the diverse Aboriginal communities achieving a group identity for the first time, Whitlam's aim of achieving self-determination for Aborigines was not accomplished.

Although the Labor Government ceased to exist after 11 November 1975, in its brief time in government, it introduced wide-ranging social and educational changes. Through the two reports on TAFE and the establishment of TAFEC, it had laid the groundwork for the development of TAFE as an identifiable part of the education spectrum over the next two decades. With the Kangan report having set the agenda for change, the next fifteen years were characterised by growth in the TAFE systems and development of national policies and structures.

4 Commonwealth policy directions 1976–1982

The Fraser Government's policies

When the Fraser Government came to power, it inherited an economy which was beginning to show some recovery from stagflation and was showing some decline in unemployment and inflation. The Fraser Government's economic policy was to institute reductions in real wages, to cut government spending and borrowing in order to bring inflation down. Thus the Australian economy had to be 'adjusted' to the external realities of international trade competition and the domestic problems of inflation. It was expected that recovery would be gradual and unemployment could not be cut down significantly until inflation was brought under control.

Early in its administration, the Fraser Government was provided with two major reports on Australian social conditions. The first of these was Professor Henderson's report on *Poverty in Australia*, which had been commissioned in 1972 by the McMahon Government and had its scope extended by the Whitlam Government. This report showed a deteriorating situation, with nearly eighteen per cent of Australian families living either on the margin of poverty or beyond it. The aged, large families and single families were found to be most at risk. The decision to cut back on government spending therefore had significant social implications. The prime minister's argument was that the task of government was simply to provide an environment in which individuals could take private action to solve their own actions. This view 'marked a return to the simple faith in the equitable workings of the market system which had characterised the Menzies era' (Commission of Inquiry Into Poverty 1975, p.97). The problem with this view when applied to social welfare was that, as Professor Henderson's report showed, whatever the opportunities in the long economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s, even on a conservative definition of poverty, some eighteen per cent of Australians missed out on the 'general prosperity'. This situation became much worse in economic downturns. An unfortunate side effect of this policy was that those such as the unemployed were held to be to blame for their situation, and during the mid-1970s, the unemployed first gained the title 'dole bludgers' and appeared to be constantly under attack. Public service cutbacks and changes to welfare systems such as social security benefits and Medibank again further disadvantaged the already disadvantaged.

The second major report was that of the Royal Commission on Human Relationships which appeared at the end of 1977. This inquiry had been personally sponsored by Malcolm Fraser, although, during its proceedings, its funding and the time available to it had both been cut down. The findings ran counter to the government's policies of self-help and self-reliance as they recommended that where the family failed in its purpose of providing support, the community (i.e. the government) should assist. The commission also found that there was still inequality among the sexes. In particular, it was harder for women to achieve financial independence, and teenage girls were leaving school with much lower self-esteem and educational qualifications than boys.

A Liberal-National Country Party document entitled *Education policy*, which was released in the second half of 1975, stated that the role of the Commonwealth in education was fourfold:

> *first, determining needs and requirements for Federal spending in education and allocating priorities within these requirements; second, coordinating programs in education with other Federal activities and with State Governments and the independent schools system; third, evaluating spending to assess effectiveness; and finally, encouraging research, innovations and experiments in education to meet the changing aspirations of society.* (Smart 1977, p.41)

The document also identified six priorities. These were:

1 *widening educational opportunity*
2 *maintaining and pursuing educational quality and excellence*
3 *providing choice in schooling*
4 *encouraging community participation in education*
5 *giving more emphasis to assessment and evaluation of expenditures and programmes*
6 *rationalising administrative arrangements*

The federalist philosophy of the coalition was reflected strongly in the section on administrative arrangements, with emphasis being given to the need for greater federal/State consultation in education. The Fraser Government hoped to renew State responsibility in public programs through new taxation reimbursements and replacement of much of the specific purpose grants with general reimbursements to the States. In 1976, guidelines were laid down for the four education commissions which specified a two per cent real growth per annum for schools, advanced education and higher education and a ten per cent growth for TAFE. Between 1976 and 1982, the Fraser Government succeeded in cutting education expenditure back from nine per cent to seven per cent of total federal outlays.

The prime minister, when minister for education, was sympathetic towards TAFE, partly because of its years of neglect but mainly because of its direct involvement with industrial development. Therefore, while the years of the Fraser Government were characterised by cuts, rationalisation and amalgamations in advanced and higher education and a drift in funding away from State schools to private schools, TAFE continued to benefit. This was because it was seen not only to be essential for increasing labour force skills and assisting economic recovery, but was also a means of picking up the casualties from the growth in unemployment and the cutbacks in the social welfare areas.

The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission

In line with the Kangan report recommendations, the Technical Education Commission was established under the Technical and Further Education Act of 1975. The functions of the commission were to inquire into, and to furnish, information and advice to the minister with respect to:

(a) *the general development of technical and further education in Australia*
(b) *the desirable standards for buildings, equipment, teaching and other staff and other facilities for TAFE colleges*
(c) *matters in connection with the payment of grants to the States for institutions providing technical and further education*
(d) *the conditions upon which financial assistance should be given*
(e) *any other matters relating to TAFE which may be referred to the Commission by the minister or which the Commission feels should be inquired into*

The commission was also asked to co-operate with the Advanced Education and Universities Commissions in examining the overall provisions of opportunities for post-school education, including the greater rationalisation of the use of resources and the more extensive use of facilities throughout the calendar year.

While, in broad terms, TAFEC continued the work of ACOTAFE, different emphases began to emerge. TAFEC was less concerned with defining TAFE and more with obtaining the necessary resources to meet the range of needs that were being identified in TAFE (Batrouney 1985, p.415). The commission saw as the central objective the development of TAFE to a position where it could function effectively alongside the other sectors of post-school education in Australia in order to enlarge the scope of opportunities for school leavers and to produce the balance of skills required in the labour force. To be able to do this, it was essential that TAFE have a proper share of the available resources. In its first (and only) report, the commission set out in detail the extent of the imbalance in the allocation of resources and the

reasons why the Federal Government and State Governments must accept responsibility to correct this imbalance.

The commission believed that top priority must be given in the 1977–79 triennium to the provision of additional student places in TAFE. This was essential if Australia was to meet the skill requirements of the labour force over the next twenty-five years. The commission believed that the following decade could be one of continuing labour shortages because, while the supply of labour might be sufficient in level, it was seriously doubted that it would be adequate in composition. In order to avoid this situation, remedial action was required on a number of fronts. The female labour supply and demand pattern would need to be reconciled, community commitment to training and retraining fostered and some nexus developed between manpower needs and the education system so that occupational choice was better founded. These themes have been raised continually over the past fifteen years in numerous reports, and attempts are still being made to achieve these objectives.

TAFEC was also required to make recommendations about funding within government-imposed guidelines, and it was under TAFEC that the processes of allocating funds to State TAFE authorities for special and particular purposes was implemented. This process enabled TAFEC to support projects of national importance in TAFE and to set national policy guidelines for the State systems.

The establishment of TAFEC was possibly the catalyst leading to the restructuring of the tertiary commissions. Soon after the election of the Fraser Government there were moves to rationalise the three separate tertiary education commissions on the grounds that:

> *there was wasteful duplication and overlap, they competed against each other for funds and, most importantly, it became increasingly difficult for federal cabinet to determine policy priorities within the tertiary education arena as a whole.* (Marshall 1991, p.218)

Between 1975 and 1977, the government considered the establishment of a new national tertiary education advisory body. This was influenced by the government's desire to re-examine the relationship between the Commonwealth and the States. In December 1975, the government appointed an Administrative Review Committee (the Bland committee) to investigate ways of achieving economies in government programs and services and of improving Commonwealth/State administrative arrangements. This was followed by a committee of officials to examine the possibilities for shared funding of education between the Commonwealth and the States. The reports of these committees were not publicly released. The question of funding arrangements for education was also referred to the AEC, which decided to reconsider the matter when the report of the Williams Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training became available.

On the basis of these events, the government decided to proceed with the introduction of new arrangements. Therefore, in 1977, CTEC was established with terms of reference similar to the Australian Universities Commission and the Advanced Education Commission. The new body consisted of a chairman and seven commissioners. Following strong lobbying, it was decided to preserve the sectoral identities, and three subordinate advisory councils were established. These were the Universities Council, the Advanced Education Council and the Technical and Further Education Council.

CTEC's main role was to ensure the balanced and co-ordinated development of all the nation's tertiary institutions. Thus, the role of the commission was to deal with inter-sectoral matters, while each council was to provide advice on policy and funding matters for its sector. The major reason for the establishment of CTEC:

> *lay in the Commonwealth Government's recognition of the importance of inter-sectoral consultations, its desire to incorporate TAFE within a comprehensive system of tertiary education and above all, in its desire to establish control and rationalisation over tertiary education as a whole* . (Batrouney 1985, p.410)

CTEC became very influential in the development of Commonwealth policies, priorities and programs for all sectors of education in Australia. However, as Batrouney (1985, p.417) points out, the Commonwealth Government exercised a great deal of control over CTEC through the

power to establish and amend membership of the commission and its councils; through expansion of their terms of reference, requests for investigations and reports on specific issues and the imposition of additional internal and external processes. The imposition of rolling triennia, financial guidelines and national priorities and the incorporation of the co-ordinating bodies processes within the government's budgetary timetable meant the government maintained a high degree of control over the operations of these bodies. The existence of other agencies (e.g. the Departments of Education and Employment and Industrial Relations) within government, which also provided an alternative source of advice, was another means of exercising control over CTEC.

CTEC's policies for TAFE

As the members of the TAFE Council of CTEC were appointed from TAFEC, it is perhaps not surprising that the policies and priorities advocated in the TAFEC report were supported and continued by CTEC. Of the original eleven members of ACOTAFE, all but three remained as members of TAFEC. The TAFE Council, with a reduced membership of nine, still retained five members who had been members of TAFEC and two members who had been members of ACOTAFE. The commission was also bound by the government guidelines which asked it:

> *to pay special attention to the requirements of the technical education sector on the understanding that States will continue to discharge in full their own financial responsibilities in this area.*
> (Tertiary Education Commission 1977, p.11)

The main policy thrust was stated as being to use Commonwealth funds to supplement the efforts of the States in increasing the capacity of TAFE to respond to community needs. Within this broad objective, the emphasis was placed on upgrading and expanding the physical capacity of TAFE institutions and on improving the quality of the planning and content of TAFE courses. The priority given to capital works was in recognition of the relative neglect that TAFE buildings and equipment have suffered during a period of increasing enrolments.

There were two categories of recurrent grants provided for TAFE that were first introduced following the Kangan report and that were continued by both TAFEC and CTEC. These were the general purpose grant to reimburse the States for the cost of abolishing fees for vocational courses and the group of special purpose grants directed at areas of special need. These areas of special need included most of those identified in the Kangan report plus some others that had emerged as a result of the expansion of TAFE. The main categories were:

- *curriculum development* both for the development of new courses to meet emerging community needs and for the systematic review of existing courses
- *the assessment of community needs* in TAFE, the assessment of the best means of providing educational opportunity for individuals and the assessment of industry requirements so as to enhance the match between college-acquired skills and job requirements
- *the development of self-paced learning*
- measures *to improve public awareness* of TAFE and to inform the public of TAFE's objectives, range of course offerings and attendance options
- increased provision of *preparatory, bridging and supplementary courses* for women seeking to re-enter the workforce, those displaced through technological or structural change and school-leavers whose education and skills were not sufficient to secure employment in a tight labour market
- measures to assist *forward planning*, particularly the development of coherent statewide strategies for development
- the development and provision of *learning resources* such as curriculum and resource centres

These priorities were endorsed in following reports.

One issue that was discussed in the first CTEC report and which became a continuing theme in following reports was that of the funding of associate diploma courses. These were Commonwealth funded, and while most were offered by CAEs, some were still provided by TAFE colleges (mainly in New South Wales). CTEC saw two risks in the Commonwealth continuing to fund middle-level courses in both advanced education and TAFE. The first was that the availability of Commonwealth funding could result in a proliferation of associate diploma courses. The second was that full Commonwealth funding of associate diploma courses and only partial funding of certificate-type middle-level courses could encourage an unnecessary upgrading of certificate courses to associate diploma status. No recommendation was made about how to resolve this dilemma, and it continued to be an item for discussion throughout the following decade.

Major government reports

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the report of COTTE presented in 1975 was not acted upon and was referred to TAFEC and the Commission of Advanced Education for their joint consideration in connection with reports for the 1977–79 triennium. TAFEC assumed the greater responsibility for following up the work of COTTE and its 1976 report gave notice that it had begun its own investigations into the teacher education needs of TAFE and would report separately to the government on this matter. TAFEC believed that in preparing its report, COTTE had been hampered by both a time constraint and a lack of detailed information on the size and nature of the gaps and deficiencies in TAFE teacher preparation. TAFEC was also concerned about COTTE's acceptance of the status quo and its decision not to concern itself with the content of courses. It therefore asked its Staff Development Sub-committee to obtain the additional information required to assist the Commonwealth to develop sound funding policies for TAFE teacher education. The report of the sub-committee was completed in 1978.

The main conclusion of the report was that existing approaches to TAFE teacher education in Australia 'bear too heavy an imprint of policies and practices more relevant to the preparation of schoolteachers' (Tertiary Education Commission 1978, p.75). The committee believed that there was insufficient recognition in Australia, that the teaching of TAFE students, the majority of whom were adult, part time and employed, often required different techniques and specialisations. It was also felt that the maturity and experience of TAFE teachers should influence the nature of teacher preparation programs. As was pointed out, TAFE teachers, by virtue of their previous qualifications and work experience, did not need to undertake some of the studies designed for inexperienced school-leavers being trained for school teaching. The committee stressed the need for the TAFE and advanced education sectors to work together to devise new administrative and academic models which would provide a more appropriate preparation for teaching in TAFE. The recommendations of the report led to an agreement at both State and Commonwealth levels that all TAFE teachers should undergo initial teacher preparation and CAEs, in consultation with their State TAFE systems, should start developing programs that were better suited to the needs of TAFE teachers.

The implementation of the recommendations of this report had important results in improving the quality of both the development and delivery of TAFE courses. It also highlighted an important difference between the TAFE and higher education sectors in that TAFE teachers were recruited on the basis of their occupational/industrial experience and provided with formal teaching qualifications, whereas academics in higher education were recruited mainly on the basis of their academic qualifications and research experience and were not usually provided with formal teaching skills. The co-ordination mechanisms provided by CTEC made it possible to implement cross-sectoral, Australia-wide changes such as this. It is doubtful that without such a body it would have been possible to undertake such a study, let alone implement its recommendations.

In February 1979, the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training (the Williams committee) submitted its report to the prime minister. This was a wide-ranging inquiry which looked at all sectors of education as well as employment and unemployment and education;

manpower forecasts and education planning; planning and administering post-secondary education and evaluation of post-secondary education. Many of the recommendations relating to TAFE were a reiteration of recommendations made in the CTEC reports—for example, the rapid improvement of TAFE statistics; increasing the range and flexibility to make TAFE courses more accessible; the need to provide learning resource centres in the colleges and the need to relate TAFE teacher education to the specific problems of teaching and learning in TAFE courses.

The report recommended that access to TAFE should be widened through increased provision of bridging, remedial and recurrent courses for groups with special needs. It also advocated a progressive movement to a substantial component of pre-employment education and training in areas where changes in the structure of industry had removed the basis of effective training, where fluctuations in an industry had caused employers to reduce the intake of apprentices to a level that would cause future shortages of tradesmen or where changes in technology had created a greater need for trainees and training than could be accommodated by the customary ratios of apprentices to tradesmen. The Williams committee, like the Kangan committee five years earlier, recommended that a National Centre for Research and Development in TAFE be established, to be funded jointly by the Commonwealth and the States. Research areas identified as requiring specific attention were basic research into the specific learning problems of Aborigines in different circumstances and 'field trials' of educational programs related to the modes of living and potential vocational activities in different regions.

The AEC discussed the Williams report recommendations at its June 1979 meeting and readily endorsed the proposals made about the importance of TAFE providing short-term training. It also endorsed the recommendation that a National TAFE Research and Development Centre be established and invited the Conference of TAFE Directors to prepare an organisational structure for such a body. In 1979, the TAFE Council obtained Commonwealth agreement for the body to be jointly funded by the Commonwealth and the States, and the centre commenced operations in 1981.

Whilst not recommending major structural changes, the Williams committee did make a number of recommendations giving the merits of a process of rationalisation and merging of a number of the smaller CAEs, most of which were former teachers colleges, into larger, multi-campus CAEs. These recommendations were not immediately acted upon but were revived in 1981, when Malcolm Fraser appointed the Committee for the Review of Commonwealth Functions (commonly known as the Lynch Razor Gang). The task of this committee was to identify ways of reducing federal expenditure. Amongst the recommendations was that beyond 1981, continued Commonwealth funding of thirty of the former teachers colleges be made conditional on their merger or amalgamation. As a result of this recommendation, the total number of CAEs dropped from around eighty to forty.

By the late 1970s, concern was being felt about the impact of technological change on the structure of work and society. In December 1978, the prime minister announced the establishment of a Committee of Inquiry into Technological Change (the Myer committee). The committee was required to:

> *examine, report and make recommendations on the process of technological change in Australian industry in order to maximise economic, social and other benefits and minimise any possible adverse consequences.* (Committee of Inquiry into Technological Change in Australia 1980, p.2)

The four-volume report was tabled in 1980 and made wide-ranging recommendations in the areas of technological change and people;, technology development and monitoring and evaluating technological change. The committee stated its belief that the long-term ability of the Australian community to maximise the benefits of technological change and to minimise adverse consequences was crucially dependent on the provision of appropriate education and training for all members of the community. The committee expressed its concern about national standards of literacy and numeracy, the high proportion of high school students who do little or no mathematics and sciences and the tendency of girls not to take courses with a technological content. The committee was particularly concerned that this could lead to

further segmentation of female employment. Like the Williams committee, the Myer committee also recommended the establishment of a National Research and Development Centre for TAFE. The committee supported the Williams committee recommendations in relation to education and training but did not make detailed recommendations as these matters were already under review by the AEC.

Many of the issues raised in the Myer committee report were taken up at State level. TAFE, in particular, was aware of the implications for education and training of technological change, and attempts were made at both State and national level (through CTEC and the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, when established) to both monitor technological change and incorporate these changes into course provision.

The significance of these reports is marked, not so much by the number of recommendations which were implemented, as in some cases very few were, but because they represented changing social attitudes and economic conditions; identified important issues to be addressed; and stimulated further changes in attitudes. All of them had important implications for TAFE, many of them reinforcing the Kangan committee's proposals and others further developing them. Many of the views and policies were incorporated in the changes that were already occurring within TAFE, particularly those related to the need to increase access to, and make better provision for, disadvantaged groups within the community. For example, in NSW TAFE, between 1976 and 1982, a number of special units were established to develop strategies for increasing access to TAFE, including the development of special courses, for women, Aborigines and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Impact of Commonwealth Government policies on TAFE

The period 1976 to 1982 marked a growing awareness of the potential for TAFE to be a major vehicle for implementing Commonwealth economic and social policies. This recognition was shown by the increase in funding for TAFE at a time when funding for other sectors was either reduced or held at a 'steady state'.

Batrouney sums up the major emphases of the Commonwealth co-ordinating bodies during the period 1975–82 as: ACOTAFE laid the conceptual foundations for TAFE; it consciously reflected the emergence of a new national sector of education and it adopted an essentially proactive approach, initiating development on a number of issues. TAFEC continued and strengthened the emphasis on TAFE as a national sector of education with national needs and priorities. The emphasis of the TAFE Council on matters such as capital programs, improving TAFE's data base and staff development showed that it was predominantly concerned with implementation within the constraints imposed by the government (Batrouney 1985, p.416).

As Robinson (1990, p.31) points out, in a federal system where financial and legislative powers are not matched, CTEC and, in particular, the TAFE Council had to rely on State administrations to achieve the Commonwealth's objectives, which were stated as being 'to upgrade the role of TAFE in tertiary education, to improve the quality of TAFE and to ensure co-ordination among the Commonwealth and the States'. The council consistently adopted a co-operative approach, always had a State TAFE Director, an industry and a TAFE teachers' representative as council members and proved to be a strong advocate in trying to have TAFE recognised as an equal partner within tertiary education. Both TAFEC during its brief life and the TAFE Council of CTEC were extremely influential in acquainting successive Commonwealth Governments with the developmental needs of TAFE systems, in securing funds to further the technological, equity and access objectives in TAFE and in addressing the considerable staff preparation, staff development, curriculum development and support service needs of a rapidly growing system. Thus the TAFE council played a very important role in developing and influencing Commonwealth Government policies for TAFE, and the consultative and co-operative approach adopted by the TAFE Council ensured that State Government policies and priorities were also considered. As early as 1978, the TAFE Council was able to quote a number of improvements in TAFE that were directly attributable to the

allocation of recurrent grants to the States. As the TAFEC report to the Tertiary Education Commission states:

- *a substantial induction program for beginning teachers is now offered in all States*
- *comprehensive staff development programmes are now seen as an essential function by each State TAFE authority*
- *an expansion of activity in the area of curriculum research and development has occurred in both the development of new courses and the review of existing courses*
- *there has been an increase in bridging, preparatory and supplementary courses*
- *counselling and guidance services have improved*
- *some States have established link programmes with secondary schools*
- *in the majority of States there has been a distinct improvement in the number and quality of staff concerned with forward planning and measures to improve the quality of TAFE*

(TAFEC 1978, pp.173–4)

TAFE was lucky that at a critical time in its development it had the support of a council which was committed to representing its constituents' interest. Peter Fleming, who was on the TAFE Council in the late 1970s, provides an example of this. The council heard a rumour that the prime minister was intending to cut the funding for capital works for TAFE and therefore suggested that he visit a TAFE College to see, first hand, what the needs were. The only time available was two to three hours between flights at Melbourne Airport. Therefore, members of the council arranged for the prime minister and the Minister for Education, Senator Carrick, to be met and taken to Footscray Institute. At this time, the advanced education section of the institute was accommodated in a new building, and the TAFE section was located in an old milk factory and two Nissan huts next to a railway line. The teachers in the Nissan huts ensured that the prime minister was detained there long enough for three trains to pass by, with the result that $50 million was provided for capital works for the triennium.

An issue that started to emerge during this period was the increase in Commonwealth Government instrumentalities involved in developing policies and programs that impacted on TAFE. For example, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) started to become increasingly involved in labour market programs, and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA) became involved in funding special English programs in TAFE.

The Williams report expressed concern about the effects of these programs on TAFE systems and stated:

> *to an increasing extent TAFE is involved in or required to complement the economic and social programs of governments. Such programs often introduced at short notice can place heavy demands on the TAFE system.* (Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training 1979, p.335)

The growth in Commonwealth-funded programs in TAFE, combined with the growth in the number of funding agencies, not only created additional administrative burdens but also educational ones. During this period, there was also the start of the tendency for Commonwealth bodies (particularly DEIR) to develop new programs which were required to be implemented with very short lead times, then to either change the program or withdraw funding. The withdrawal of funding or the imposition of a requirement for States to fund a certain amount of places in order to gain the Commonwealth funds became common with pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship courses. This became even more prevalent in the 1980s, and, combined with the constant changes to labour market programs, increased tensions between the States and the Commonwealth.

The period 1975–1982 could be summarised as being one of growth for TAFE as the Kangan committee recommendations were implemented and the TAFE Council continued to support the need for ongoing capital and recurrent funding for TAFE. In many ways, it could be seen to be the 'golden age' for TAFE as it continued to grow, was held in high esteem by governments and finally acquired an identifiable role in the education spectrum. It was also a period of increased Commonwealth intervention in TAFE policies and programs as succeeding government inquiries saw TAFE as a vehicle for implementing change.

5 Changes in TAFE 1976–1982

Overview

The period from 1976 to 1982 saw immense changes occur in TAFE in all States and Territories. The Kangan report and the major Commonwealth reports discussed in the previous chapter had an influential effect on the educational philosophy and program directions of TAFE systems, and the provision of Commonwealth funds made it possible to expand provision and implement new programs. There was a continuing growth in enrolment numbers in all States and Territories and important changes in the TAFE student profile as a result of the improvement in student financial assistance and the targeting of educational programs at disadvantaged groups.

During this period, one State after another set up inquiries into post-secondary education. Common themes in each inquiry were the relationship between the three sectors of post-secondary education, the need to co-ordinate the separate sectors and the desire to try to define TAFE's role and place within tertiary education. In many States, the impetus for these inquiries was the influx of Commonwealth funding specifically for TAFE, which meant that TAFE could no longer be ignored. The need to provide triennial planning submissions to the Commonwealth for three sectors of education meant that existing structures and co-ordination mechanisms need to be reviewed and reformed.

New South Wales

Changes in technical education actually commenced before the release of the Kangan report. In New South Wales, the impetus came from within the Department of Technical Education and was embodied in new legislation. A Bill to change the title of the department and the structure of its administration had been under consideration for a number of years and was finally introduced into Parliament in September 1974 and the new Act was promulgated in 1975.

The most obvious change achieved by the Act was to alter the name of the department to the Department of Technical and Further Education. The Act also disbanded the Technical Education Advisory Council and replaced it with the Council of Technical and Further Education and provided for the establishment of college or district councils or committees with advisory and executive powers to be delegated by the minister. The main purpose of these changes was to provide for a greater community and industry involvement in TAFE. It was also envisaged that the administration of the department would be further decentralised to permit greater flexibility in meeting regional needs for post-secondary education.

As part of this ethos of decentralisation and improving TAFE provision in regional areas, the New South Wales Government took up with great enthusiasm the concept of community colleges espoused in the Fitzgerald report on education. In 1974, the Policy and Planning Committee of the Minister for Education established a sub-committee to advise on the implications for New South Wales of the concept of community colleges. In October 1975, the committee submitted a preliminary report which made special reference to the possibility of establishing community colleges in the New England and Orana (Dubbo and environs) regions. As the Williams report pointed out, the basic approach of the committee, which was that community colleges could be developed from existing TAFE facilities, was similar to the approach taken by the Partridge committee in Western Australia. These recommendations were considered by the New South Wales Government, which adopted, in principle, the concept of community colleges for New South Wales and gave approval for the New England

and Orana regions to be the subject of the first in-depth studies of its application. The committee on the Application of the Community College Concept in the Orana and New England Regions was established to develop detailed proposals. The report of this committee was submitted to the Education Co-ordination Committee in May 1977.

Although the report provided detailed recommendations for the establishment of both colleges, only the recommendations about the Orana College were implemented and these not in their entirety. In 1977, the Department of TAFE implemented a policy of regionalisation through the appointment of regional directors to the Hunter, Illawarra, North Coast, Riverina, New England and Central West regions. The establishment of the Orana Community College, with its administrative centre at Dubbo and campuses at towns like Mudgee, Wellington and Bourke, in practice became the establishment of another TAFE region, as it operated in the same way as the other regional centres. The different campuses of the Orana College were still managed by principals, and the constituent colleges operated no differently from others in the New South Wales TAFE system.

In 1976, prior to the State election, the premier announced that the government would legislate for an Education Commission. In August 1976, the Minister for Education, Eric Bedford, appointed a working party to draw up recommendations for the establishment of such a commission. Two interim reports were prepared and circulated for public comment, with the final report being presented in April 1978. The second interim report proposed the establishment of a single Education Commission which would be:

> *responsible to the Minister for Education for the development, control and maintenance of the public education services of New South Wales and for the provision of school and technical and further education.* (Working Party for the Establishment of an Education Commission 1977)

In responding to the interim reports, there were many criticisms of the proposal to establish a single commission. There was particular opposition from TAFE, with the Director-General, Mr Merv Watson, submitting a minority report. There was also opposition from the Conference of Principals of New South Wales CAEs and the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors Committee. The major criticisms of the proposal were that the proposed Education Commission would concern itself with public educational services of all types and levels in the State and, therefore, it would be representative of the interests of the schools rather than those of the total education portfolio. There were also concerns that the membership of the commission as proposed, although conceived as a representative body, was inadequately constituted to reflect the wide range of community interest in education. There was also strong and widespread support for TAFE to continue to be separated from the administration of schools. Mr Watson proposed that rather than a single commission, the government should establish two commissions—a State Schools Commission and a College and Universities Commission.

The working party finally recommended that:

> *existing mechanisms for co-ordination and effective decision-making in public education be improved by the establishment of a single education commission as a representative body able to bring the views of the community and employees to the development of overall policy for public education in New South Wales.*
>
> (Working Party for the Establishment of an Education Commission 1978, p.21)

However, the strength of the pressure for two commissions did lead to an amended recommendation regarding TAFE, which was:

> *That the present Departments of Education and Technical and Further Education remain separate administrative units under the Commission; that there be separate teaching services for schools and technical and further education; and separate budget provisions for each.*
>
> (Working Party for the Establishment of an Education Commission 1978, p.21)

The report also recommended that the Higher Education Board remain a separate body with direct access to the minister but included the requirement that it consult with the Education Commission before making reports and recommendations to the minister on particular matters.

The Education Commission was established and survived for nearly a decade. In practice, it became merely an advisory mechanism to the minister and had very little impact on either the policies or operations of the Department of Education or the Department of TAFE as the director-generals of the two departments still had direct access to the minister and still retained responsibility for policy and operations.

Victoria

TAFE in Victoria in the mid-1970s was a very complex organisation as TAFE programs were offered by two entirely self-governing technical colleges; by a number of self-governing institutions combining advanced education and TAFE elements; by technical colleges administered by the Education Department and by technical secondary schools also administered by the department.

During the early 1970s, following a report by independent consultants, there was a reorganisation of the Education Department. The principal structure had been five operating divisions for teacher education, primary, secondary and technical education and special services. The reorganisation changed this into a structure based on functions such as administration, curriculum, finance, buildings and personnel. Each of these was to service all the operational areas. Unfortunately, this proved to be ineffective in practice, as the administrative sections underneath the new management structure remained unchanged. This caused major problems in the early 1980s when attempts were made to separate TAFE from the Department of Education. The situation was further complicated by the attempts to regionalise the administration. For those involved in TAFE, the addition of regional service directorates to the operating divisions within the Department of Education was seen to increase complexity rather than improve the efficiency of operations.

Following the release of the Kangan report, the State Council of Technical Education began to experience both the new sense of identity and excitement which had been infused into TAFE by the Kangan report, and an increasing dissatisfaction with the treatment TAFE was receiving from the Education Department. TAFE was also regarded as 'the poor cousin' in the joint CAE/TAFE institutions. The growing discontent with TAFE's situation was summed up in a submission to the Williams Inquiry prepared by the Curriculum Board in December 1977, which stated that:

> *We believe that while the TAFE organisation remains enmeshed within the wider Department, and its objectives and operations are hampered by primary and secondary school teaching in the top administration, and by the Teacher's Tribunal, it cannot be fully effective. In fact, we are concerned that TAFE may be prevented from developing sufficiently to meet the future challenges that we would hope would flow from your Inquiry. We therefore believe that the administration of TAFE should be separated from that of primary and secondary schools.* (Ryan 1982, p.18)

In July 1976, the State Education Minister announced the establishment of a Committee of Inquiry into Post Secondary Education in Victoria, under the chairmanship of Professor P H Partridge. The terms of reference of the committee were very broad as they were to advise the minister:

> *on any matter relating generally to post-secondary education in Victoria and in particular with respect to -*
>
> *(a) the present and future demands for post-secondary education of all kinds in Victoria*
>
> *(b) the present and future employment opportunities for people with post-secondary educational qualifications*
>
> *(c) the proper patterns of development and relationships of the various streams of post-secondary education in Victoria determined in the light of the conclusions arising from (a) and (b) and of the educational issues concerned*
>
> *(d) measures which should be implemented to avoid unnecessary duplication and overlap of courses and facilities in existing provisions for post-secondary education or likely to occur as a result of projected new developments*

As well, the committee was asked to constantly review all aspects of post-secondary education in Victoria; maintain liaison with the Education Department on the development of TAFE programs to ensure that duplication with other areas of post-secondary education was avoided and examine and report upon the levels of qualifications for entry to professions and trades in Victoria.

The role of TAFE was considered in chapter 7 of the committee's report. The twenty-seven submissions received by the inquiry concerned with TAFE matters commented on the inadequacy of TAFE funding, the way TAFE was treated in the department's budgetary process, the difficulties facing TAFE colleges recruiting staff under the Teachers' Tribunal and the Registration Board and, in some cases, argued for an independent administration for TAFE. Although the committee conceded that 'given the distinctive character of TAFE it is evident that the system is unlikely to develop effectively if its administration is linked too closely to either a secondary or a tertiary education system', it did not recommend a separate administration for TAFE as existed in other States such as New South Wales and South Australia, but instead recommended a fairly complex set of arrangements (Post-secondary Education Committee of Inquiry 1978).

The major recommendation was the establishment by statute of a new administrative authority to be called the Victorian Post-secondary Education Commission (VPSEC), whose broad functions were to advise the Victorian Government and the relevant Commonwealth authorities on all matters relating to the development, operation and funding of post-secondary education in Victoria. The committee also recommended the establishment by new legislation of a Board of Technical and Further Education, subordinate and advisory to VPSEC and the abolition of the existing State Council for Technical Education. The new board was to be responsible for advising the commission on all matters relating to TAFE and for implementation, in the TAFE field, of the general post-secondary education policies evolved by the commission. The board's area of responsibility was to include all TAFE across the State and also the technical and further education divisions of CAEs.

The committee did not support the proposals for a separate administration for TAFE but, instead, suggested ways of effecting close working arrangements between the Board of Technical and Further Education and the Education Department and set some conditions upon which the inclusion of TAFE within the Education Department should continue. In addition, the committee commented that:

> *if events show that these conditions are being inadequately met in the future, it may become necessary for the Victorian Post Secondary Education Commission to recommend that the administration of TAFE be transferred either to a separate Department of technical and further education or to a statutory authority set up for the purpose.*
>
> (Post-secondary Education Committee of Inquiry 1978)

In 1978, VPSEC was established and largely absorbed the functions of the Victoria Institute of Colleges and the State College of Victoria. Although its first priority was to restructure the advanced education sector, in 1979 it began its own inquiry into the need for a TAFE Board. In February 1979, VPSEC distributed a questionnaire to all TAFE institutions and organisations and other interested parties asking whether the TAFE Board should be established and whether or not the administration of TAFE should remain with the Education Department. There was a much greater response to the questionnaire than there had been to the Partridge committee and in November 1979, VPSEC reported to the minister that 'taking note of the strong majority support contained in the submissions an interim Technical and Further Education Board should be established' (Ryan 1982, p.18).

In 1980, the new Minister for Education, Mr A J Hunt, took a personal interest in the debate on the administration of TAFE. Through consultation with various parties, it became clear that all parties except the Education Department wanted a TAFE Board with maximum autonomy. Therefore, in February 1980, the minister announced the creation of a TAFE Board which was formally established on 1 July 1980. The original idea was that the board would have responsibility for policy and planning for TAFE and that the administrative functions would remain part of the Education Department. Within seven months, the new board was able to

present to the minister a proposal for the future administration of TAFE, the main features of which were that:

- the statewide administration of TAFE should be separated from the Education Department
- a small unit responsible directly to the TAFE Board should be established to assist in the formulation and implementation of its policy decisions
- regional TAFE Boards should be established throughout Victoria to make decisions and recommendations regarding the most rational use of regional resources within the framework of TAFE Board and government policy
- all providers of TAFE should remain responsible for administering their own programs within the context of State and regional policy decisions

On 7 April 1981, a ministerial statement was read in both houses of Parliament which accepted that the statewide administration of TAFE should be separated from the Education Department, supported the establishment of the regional boards, and supported the retention of existing TAFE providers who would remain responsible for the administration of their own programs within the framework of policy decisions at the State and regional level.

Despite the establishment of the TAFE Board, there were still a number of difficulties involved in administering TAFE. In 1981, TAFE was responsible to three ministers. These were the Minister for Education, the Assistant Minister for Education (responsible for facilities) and the Minister for Labour. This situation was fraught with tension and made it difficult to get ministerial approvals. The TAFE Board was also required to send everything to VPSEC for endorsement. This also created delays and tensions.

However, despite these difficulties, some progress was made. In September 1981, thirty-one colleges of TAFE were created. Twenty-nine of these were entirely separate from either technical schools or CAEs. Two, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Swinburne, remained multi-sectoral colleges. However, negotiations were undertaken to ensure that the TAFE budgets were separate from the CAE budgets.

At the beginning of 1983, the part-time chairman of the board was replaced by a full-time chairman who was also the chief executive of the Office of the TAFE Board. Although the establishment of the TAFE Board marked the beginning of a new era for TAFE in Victoria, it was to take to the end of 1986 before TAFE was finally separated from other sectors of education. During this period, there were changes of government and constant changes of ministers which led to continual restructuring of the Office of the TAFE Board, changes in membership of the board itself and immense difficulties in getting the board's reforms approved. There were six different ministers in less than a decade, and each minister had an average life of less than two years. However, by the mid-1980s, Victoria had finally achieved an identifiable TAFE sector.

South Australia

On 27 July 1976, the Minister for Education announced the appointment of a Committee to Enquire into Post Secondary Education in South Australia. This was the second major enquiry in less than a decade. The committee of three was chaired by Dr D S Anderson. Specific terms of reference were:

- to gauge the requirements of the State of South Australia for courses and institutions in the post-secondary field, and to determine the extent to which these needs are being met from existing resources
- to make recommendations to the South Australian Government as to what additional resources or what re-allocation of existing resources might best ensure that responsibility for satisfying these needs is adequately discharged

- to investigate means of ensuring increased flexibility of movement of students between classes of institution and in particular the granting of credit for course work done in another institution
- to comment on any financial implications that any of the above may have on institutions providing post-secondary education

In undertaking this enquiry, the committee not only looked at the existing range of tertiary education students but also the post-secondary education needs of special groups within the community. These included Aboriginal people, migrants, women and people in country areas. It also looked at other issues being debated within Australia such as youth unemployment, recurrent education, recognition of credit, teacher education and community colleges. In respect of the last of these, it was recommended that:

> *the name 'community college' should not be used in South Australia. In the technical and further education sector, country colleges with continuing involvement in higher education should be known as 'regional colleges' and all other colleges as 'colleges of further education'.*
>
> (Committee of Enquiry into Post Secondary Education in South Australia 1978, p.5)

The recommendations of the committee were intended to create a more co-ordinated system of tertiary education in South Australia. It was recommended that the three sectors would remain and that there would be two universities, six CAEs and the Department of Further Education (DFE) administering its twenty-nine colleges. It was also proposed that there would be a more effective use of resources as a result of amalgamations and greater collaboration between institutions with the establishment of a co-ordinating authority to be known as the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia (TEASA). This body would be able to plan for the entire system.

The proposed functions of the Tertiary Education Authority were to advise the Minister of Education and the federal authorities on the financial needs of post-secondary education in South Australia and to approve proposals for new courses to prevent a recurrence of the border disputes and unnecessary duplications that had occurred in the past. The committee also recommended that a specially constituted standing committee of the authority should be set up for accreditation purposes and that accreditation, which in the past had applied only to advanced education and technician courses, should be extended to all substantial courses in DEF.

The report made some specific recommendations relating to TAFE. One was that DFE should, in collaboration with TEASA, give priority in its planning and allocation of resources to programs for unemployed youth and to the needs of such groups as Aboriginal people, migrants, women and country residents. It was also suggested that, in its country colleges, DFE should develop information and guidance services covering all aspects of post-secondary education and that TEASA should examine the possibility of country colleges providing higher education in conjunction with the universities and CAEs. The South Australian Government endorsed the committee's main recommendations and established TEASA.

In 1980, the Minister for Education in South Australia appointed a Committee of Inquiry into Education in South Australia under the chairmanship of Dr John Keeves, Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The committee was asked to investigate the conduct of education in South Australia and to review the effectiveness of changes that had occurred as a result of the 1971 Karmel Enquiry. The committee was asked to report in two stages, thereby providing an opportunity for discussion and reactions on the first report, prior to developing the arguments and recommendations in the second phase. The first report was presented in February 1981 and the second in January 1982.

The major recommendations that concerned TAFE related to the functions of TAFE, education and technological change, accountability and planning. The report mentioned that there had been criticisms that the department had focussed its programs too much on the area of leisure education at the expense of providing an adequate supply of skilled tradesmen to industry. It was recommended that, in future, TAFE colleges would need to be more flexible and sensitive

to the needs of industry than they had been in the past and that to assist in this, a TAFE Advisory Committee should be established.

In looking at education and technological change, following the release of the Myer committee report on technological change in Australia, the committee recommended that systematic study be undertaken to identify likely technological changes that would affect Australian industry; assess the effects of such technologies on the skills required by existing occupational groups and the need for new categories of workers and define the training that would be required to meet these changes. It was recommended that this study be undertaken by the new TAFE National Centre for Research and Development. The committee also looked at how educational institutions could use the new technologies in their teaching programs and how technological change could be incorporated in the curricula of educational institutions at all levels.

In respect of accountability, the committee pointed out that expenditure on education was the largest single component in the State budget and therefore there was a need for continuing assessment of the progress of education in the State both for the purposes of accountability for the spending of public monies and because of the increased present and future demands made on the educational system. As well as recommending that every ten years provision should be made for a thorough evaluative review of the educational system at all levels, the committee also looked in detail at TAFE's policies and practices relating to teaching effort. A number of recommendations were made as to how the department could make more effective use of its staff and measures to be adopted to improve planning and co-ordination within TAFE.

The major change that occurred as a result of these reports was the change of name from the Department of Further Education to the Department of TAFE. The Advisory Council was established but only lasted for three years. In line with changes that were occurring in all TAFE systems, action was taken to improve provision for disadvantaged groups. However, on the whole, there was little structural or organisational change to the system.

Western Australia

As a result of the rapid growth of post-secondary education in Western Australia following the Jackson report of 1967, at the end of 1974 the State Government appointed the Advisory Committee on Post-secondary Education under the chairmanship of Professor P H Partridge. The terms of reference were wide-ranging and included:

- the patterns of post-secondary education elsewhere in Australia and overseas including continuing education and non-traditional patterns of study
- the possible modifications of existing institutions and the development of new types of institutions to meet present and future educational and cultural needs of students at the post-secondary level
- the principles that should govern access to post-secondary education and transfer of students between institutions
- the extension of provision for post-secondary education to country districts in Western Australia, having regard to the development of areas concerned and not simply the economic viability of the institutions created
- appropriate means and authorities, for future co-ordination and planning to ensure the efficient and balanced development of post-secondary education in Western Australia

Unlike the Anderson report on Post-secondary Education in South Australia, which accepted TAFE as a post-secondary education sector without debate, the Partridge report considered the issue of where TAFE fitted in the educational spectrum. The report pointed out that the work of the Technical Education Division [of the Education Department] ranged widely in educational level and felt it was necessary for the committee to indicate which parts of the Technical Education Division should be accepted as falling within post-secondary education. As the report says:

teaching illiterate adults to read or conducting a course in mathematics for the Tertiary Admissions Examination does not differ in educational level from primary or secondary teaching. At the other extreme, some of the sophisticated engineering, science or accounting studies are closely comparable to courses in colleges of advanced education. There are other study areas which are unique to technical education and have no counterparts in either colleges of advanced education or primary or secondary schools. (Committee on Post-secondary Education 1976, p.94)

The committee finally decided that technical education should be regarded as post-secondary education, partly because it enrolled only those students who are above the age of compulsory school attendance, and therefore concerned mainly with the education of adults, and partly because all the 'current teaching of the Technical Education Division is eligible for supplementary funding on the recommendations of TAFEC of the Commonwealth Government'.

Another important issue that was debated was whether or not the Technical Education Division should be separated from the administrative control of the Department of Education. The arguments raised both for and against were similar to those raised in Victoria a few years later during their Partridge Committee of Inquiry. The main argument for separation was that the Technical Education Division had always been financially disadvantaged because of the pressures in relation to primary and secondary education. While accepting that there might be some validity in these arguments, the committee did not agree with them, believing that the Technical Education Division of the department could find ways of informing the minister of its wishes, a view that shows a certain naivete in how government departments operate. However, in its final recommendations, the committee did end up proposing that the Technical Education Division should be removed from the Education Department and that a statutory body should be set up. The new agency would be known as the Technical and Further Education Authority, and it was proposed that it should be responsible for the development and administration of technical education in the State through its governing council.

The other major recommendations were the creation of a Western Australian Post-secondary Education Commission(WAPSEC), the establishment of a statutory authority for TAFE, the amalgamation of the teachers colleges into a multi-campus CAE and the creation of comprehensive community colleges in selected country areas.

In 1976, the Western Australian Government created WAPSEC on the lines proposed by the committee and including the committee's recommendation that WAPSEC be required to give 'due regard to the traditional autonomy of universities and to the major role of universities in areas outside the scope of post-secondary education' (Committee on Post-secondary Education, 1976, p.154). The main functions of WAPSEC were:

- to consult and collaborate with the government of Western Australia, the Commonwealth Commissions for Tertiary Education and TAFE, and the institutions for post-secondary education with regard to the planning, development and co-ordination of post-secondary education in the State
- to consider the future development of post-secondary institutions, including the establishment, development and location of new ones
- to consult with the post-secondary institutions and to advise the appropriate State and Commonwealth authorities concerning the funding

Acting on the advice of WAPSEC, the government decided not to amalgamate the teachers colleges as the colleges were sufficiently large and sophisticated to be in control of their own destinies. After long consideration, the government also did not proceed with the establishment of a statutory TAFE authority, and TAFE remained within the Department and then Ministry of Education until the late 1980s.

Queensland

In 1978, the Queensland Government appointed a Select Committee to inquire into, report upon and make recommendations about, the system of education in Queensland and the extent to which it met the expectations of students, parents and the community. The terms of reference referred particularly to the efficiency and adequacy of secondary education and adequate technical education to meet industry needs. This was the first major review of education in Queensland since the 1875 Royal Commission into Education.

The Select Committee (known as the Ahern committee) initially intended to present only two interim reports. However, following strong community response, the committee prepared further interim reports on key areas in education, rather than accumulating all the recommendations in the final report. The sixth (and last interim report) was on post-secondary education, and this included discussion about the feasibility of establishing community colleges in Queensland.

The final report of the Select Committee was tabled in 1980. Although the terms of reference required the committee to examine the adequacy of technical education, apart from a few paragraphs in the section on the history of education in Queensland, there was not a separate section on technical education and there were only three recommendations relating to it in the rest of the report. Two of these related to the provision of technical correspondence courses and the third recommended that no community college should be established without full consultation with all the post-secondary institutions which would be affected. This last recommendation was made following concern expressed by some post-secondary institutions regarding recommendations made in relation to community colleges in the 6th Interim Report.

The final report also made a brief reference to an issue raised in the 6th Interim Report regarding the difficulty students experienced when trying to transfer between TAFE colleges, CAEs and universities. However, no recommendations were made as to how these difficulties might be resolved.

This inquiry into education in Queensland, therefore, had no impact whatsoever on TAFE. However, during the period 1976 to 1982, there were some changes in structure and operation. TAFE officially came into being on 1 January 1977, when, by Cabinet decision, the adult and technical sectors of the Department of Education were integrated. This involved rationalisation of courses and resources and the placement of the former adult education officers (re-named extension program officers) into TAFE colleges.

Another change was the creation of a separate TAFE Operations Section in 1978 which had responsibility for providing a direct line between TAFE colleges and the head office organisation to co-ordinate all TAFE activities on a statewide basis and to provide executive services to the Board of Adult Education. The operations section also assumed responsibility for student counselling, student health and welfare and all aspects of college safety. These changes were a result of the impact of Commonwealth funding on TAFE and the policies of CTEC rather than an acknowledgment by the State Government of the need to expand and upgrade TAFE.

Unlike other States, there appears to have been little pressure exerted on the government during this period to separate TAFE from the Department of Education and establish it as a separate authority. When the pressure did start in the mid to late 1980s the TAFE section was removed from the Department of Education and combined with the Employment and Training Department.

Tasmania

In 1975, the Committee on Post-secondary Education in Tasmania (the Karmel committee) was appointed by the Australian and Tasmanian Ministers for Education to report on the promotion, development and co-ordination of post-secondary education in the State, having

regard to its future needs. For the purposes of the inquiry, post-secondary education was to be broadly interpreted as including university education, advanced education and aspects of technical, further and continuing education.

The committee found that Tasmanian participation in TAFE was markedly lower than for Australia as a whole and that, although in the process of change, it was still dominated by traditional technical education for the trades. The committee believed there was considerable scope for the development of certificate level courses for technicians and middle level or paraprofessional personnel. In addition, many of the post-secondary educational needs of the non-metropolitan areas of the State could be met by greater co-ordination and use of the resources of the TAFE and matriculation colleges and other governmental and non-governmental educational resources available in the community. The committee proposed that the role of the existing TAFE system in Tasmania should be broadened to enable TAFE to become a major vehicle for expanding post-secondary educational opportunities.

The committee also recommended that a broadly based co-ordinating committee for TAFE be established to report to the minister on the co-ordination of all TAFE activities within the State, including the integration of all the Education Department's post-secondary educational resources. The committee did consider whether a separate department or authority should be established for TAFE. Although it was decided that it was not warranted at that stage, it was recommended that the question be reviewed in five years time. This review did not occur, and it was not until the late 1980s that TAFE was separated from the Education Department and combined with the Department of Employment and Training.

Following the Karmel committee's report, a Ministerial Working Party on Tertiary Education in Tasmania was established, chaired by Mr D A Kearney. This committee reported back in 1978 and endorsed the approach of the Karmel committee which, in 1976, had recommended that the University of Tasmania should have the major responsibility for tertiary education in the south, the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education responsibility in the north and that there should be a new community college in the north-west. The Kearney committee also recommended the creation of a statutory Tertiary Education Commission to advise the State minister on the establishment and location of any new tertiary institutions, consider the requests and submissions of the three institutions that related to their proposals for future developments in tertiary education and, where appropriate, report to the minister or the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.

In August 1978, the Minister for Education in Tasmania announced that the government had decided to establish a Tertiary Education Commission along the lines proposed by the working party. However, the TAFE system would be administered by a Director of Further Education from within the Tasmanian Department of Education. TAFE would now be regarded as part of the tertiary education system, and a State Council for Further Education would advise on the development and operation of Further Education.

The Australian Capital Territory

In September 1973, the Minister for Education announced that an inquiry was to be made into technical education in the Australian Capital Territory. The main catalyst for this was the decision made by the government to proceed with the setting up of an Interim Australian Capital Territory Schools Authority. This brought with it a need to examine provisions made in the Australian Capital Territory for technical education, as this had not been made one of the responsibilities of the Schools Authority. In announcing the terms of reference, the minister referred to the inquiry as complementary to the ACOTAFE inquiry. The terms of reference stated that:

> *Bearing in mind that technical education in the Australian Capital Territory may become the responsibility of an authority established for that purpose, to investigate and report on technical education in the Australian Capital Territory and nearby areas including:*
>
> *(a) the aims of technical education, taking into account community attitudes and aspirations and needs of individuals*

(b) *the development of courses to meet occupational requirements and community needs*

(c) *the organisational structure most suited to the aims and needs of technical education*

(d) *the recruitment and training of teaching staff*

(e) *the relevance of trends in technical education within Australia and overseas*

(f) *necessary planning and building programs*

The committee recommended the establishment of an Australian Capital Territory Technical Colleges Authority, responsible to the Minister for Education, to plan, co-ordinate and administer technical education in the Australian Capital Territory. The authority would be responsible for the existing Canberra Technical College at Reid, its annexes and for each future technical college to be provided in the Australian Capital Territory. The committee also recommended the establishment of college councils.

One of the most important recommendations was the one relating to liaison with the New South Wales Department of Technical Education, which had up till then provided courses and teachers for the Australian Capital Territory. It was recommended that the proposed ACT Technical Colleges Authority maintain a liaison with New South Wales but that dependence on New South Wales be phased out progressively as the authority became able to assume a greater responsibility for technical education in the Australian Capital Territory. This recommendation was accepted and implemented, with teachers employed by the New South Wales Department of Technical Education being given the opportunity to either stay in the new Australian Capital Territory structure or to be transferred to another college in the New South Wales TAFE system.

The Northern Territory

Darwin Community College, which had responsibility for TAFE, was opened in 1974. Both practical and ideological reasons were behind the establishment of a community college rather than a more conventional institution such as a TAFE or an advanced education college. It was believed that one multi-purpose institution providing a wide range of courses would be cheaper than establishing several different types of institutions. It was also believed that there were advantages in mixing students from diverse backgrounds and doing different courses. Development of the college was severely disrupted by the cyclone which devastated Darwin on 25 December 1974. Not only were buildings damaged but important college records, equipment and other materials were blown away and never recovered. During and following the cyclone, remaining college buildings were used as a refuge for Darwin residents.

During 1974, the college operated mainly in Darwin, although it also had a major annexe at Alice Springs, known as the Alice Springs Community College, another substantial annexe at Batchelor and smaller annexes at Katherine, Altanga, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy. The Darwin Community College continued to be the main source of all post-secondary education in the Territory until changes occurred in the late 1980s.

After the Northern Territory became independent in June 1979, the Northern Territory Division of the Commonwealth Department of Education was abolished as responsibility for education was transferred to the new Northern Territory Government.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the above, there were considerable differences in the way the post-secondary education inquiries treated the issue of TAFE's independence, and the findings of each were a demonstration of the lack of consensus on TAFE's role. Although most of the inquiries considered the issue of whether TAFE should become a separate administrative entity and admitted there were strong arguments in favour of this move, only in Victoria was some move made to separate TAFE from the Education Department. As Robinson points out, 'six committees found TAFE too hard to catch, identify and place in its own pen' (Robinson 1990, p.35).

As was to be expected following the inability of the inquiries to come to terms with TAFE, the organisational and structural changes which occurred in each State and Territory were, in most cases, fairly minor, particularly when compared to the enormous educational changes which were occurring within State and Territory TAFE systems. During the period 1976–82, there were significant increases in enrolments, changes in the characteristics of TAFE students, improvements in student support systems and changes in the educational profiles of TAFE colleges.

In 1975, the first and only national survey of TAFE students was undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Education. In the introduction to the survey, it was pointed out that research in post-secondary education had been restricted almost exclusively to universities and CAEs and that for several years detailed information had been collected and published on a wide range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of students attending those institutions. By comparison, little information was available on TAFE. The survey found that in 1975:

> *The typical TAFE student is male, in his late teens and not married. Both he and his parents were born in Australia, and he lives with his parents. He completed the New South Wales Form 4 level or its equivalent at a government secondary school, and is undertaking his first course since leaving school. He is not undertaking any other course. He is enrolled as a part-time student and his field of study is 'engineering' which he is undertaking in either Stream 2 (Para-professional) or Stream 3 (Trades). He works in a full-time job for an employer as a 'Tradesman, production-process or related worker', and there is about a 50/50 chance that he is bonded or indentured to his employer. He works a 40-hour week, of which less than 10 hours are spent attending a TAFE institution.*
>
> (Commonwealth Department of Education 1978, p.70)

This profile was based on the main findings of the survey which follow:

- Males accounted for nearly two-thirds of TAFE enrolments.
- 30 per cent of total enrolments were in the 'engineering' field of study.
- There was significant difference in the age distributions of male and female students with the median ages of 21.9 years for males and 27.6 for females.
- TAFE students were spread widely across all age groups, with nearly 13 per cent being 40 years of age or more.
- The patterns of attendance constituted a major difference from other post-secondary institutions. While part-time enrolments formed 28.5 per cent of total enrolments in universities and 32 per cent of enrolments in CAEs, 82 per cent of enrolments in TAFE were part time or studying by correspondence.
- The level of secondary education completed by TAFE students varied considerably. While 19 per cent had progressed no further than Form 3, 18.5 per cent had completed Form 6.
- 80 per cent of TAFE students were in paid employment compared with 57 per cent for the Australian population 15 to 64 years of age.

Although there was not an equivalent survey undertaken in later years to provide a basis of comparison, an analysis of CTEC statistics for 1982 showed there had been some considerable changes. For example, enrolments had more than doubled, the participation rates of females had improved, and there had been a significant increase in adult enrolments. By 1982, 37.7 per cent of students were aged between fifteen and nineteen years; 32.4 per cent were aged between twenty and twenty-nine years and thirty per cent were over thirty years of age.

While there was a major growth in the number of full-time enrolments in TAFE (from 25 000 in 1973 to more than 60 000 in 1982), part-time and correspondence students still accounted for more than ninety per cent of the total student population. However, while full-time students made up only 8.5 per cent of enrolments, their corresponding share of student load was 33.7 per cent across all streams of study.

The educational profile had also changed. Although the number of enrolments in trade courses increased significantly between 1975 and 1982, it declined as a proportion of total

enrolments. The areas of greatest growth were Streams 4 (other skilled) and Stream 5 (Preparatory). These categories included Commonwealth-funded labour market programs and a wide range of special access programs for disadvantaged groups such as Aboriginal people, women, people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, people with disabilities and the unemployed.

Thus, by 1982, TAFE was very different from the system it had been in 1975. The combination of economic, social and political changes at both State and Commonwealth levels had changed the charter, the structure, and the nature of the student population and the educational profile. The provision of additional funding from the Commonwealth, both capital and recurrent, had enabled TAFE to expand to try to meet the ever-increasing needs for vocational and preparatory education.

All TAFE systems had policies and strategies in place to target disadvantaged groups and improve their access to TAFE. For example, in New South Wales during the mid to late 1970s, there were a number of new initiatives aimed at increasing community access to TAFE. In 1976, the Operation Outreach project was initiated as a pilot project. The methods adopted included providing courses in non-institutional settings, conducting programs in languages other than English and developing courses in direct response to the special needs of the multi-cultural local community. During this period, the department also established a Women's Co-ordination Unit, an Aboriginal Education Unit, a Multi-cultural Education Unit and a Transition Education Unit.

There were also improvements in the quality of TAFE's educational provision and in the services it provided for students. These changes can be seen by the increase in the number of counselling staff, growth in the number of colleges with staffed libraries, increased effort in staff development and the provision of more up-to-date technology. The impact of the Commonwealth recurrent grants could also be seen in the more frequent updating of curricula, the adoption of more flexible student assessment techniques, the growing use of educational media and the increased involvement of TAFE staff in educational research and development.

Although not all TAFE systems had managed to disengage themselves from departments of education, the provision of specific purpose and tied grants from the Commonwealth had given them a greater financial autonomy and had enabled them to expand and gain a bit more operational autonomy. This was also a period when both Commonwealth Government and State Governments began to regard TAFE as part of the tertiary educational system, rather than an extension of secondary education. In all the State Government inquiries during this period, a constant theme was the place of TAFE in the educational spectrum. Although there was considerable debate, and not all States were prepared to separate TAFE from their Education Departments, all at least had acknowledged that TAFE had to be recognised a sector in its own right.

6 The early years of the Hawke Government

Introduction

At the end of 1982, the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, believing that the drought would continue to have a debilitating effect on the Australian economy, called an election for March 1983. On the day he asked the governor-general to grant him a double-dissolution, Bob Hawke gained the leadership of the Labor Party and, in the ensuing election, won a comfortable lead in the House of Representatives. Although the Democrats held the balance of power in the Senate, they were pledged never to use the Senate's authority to force an election. The new government was therefore able to entrench itself more securely than any previous Labor Government. The new Labor Government had another advantage in that for most of the 1980s, Labor was also in power in four of the six States. Gough Whitlam had frequently complained that as prime minister, his hands were tied in many areas because he had the majority of State Governments against him. This was a problem Bob Hawke did not have to face.

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) came to power with a platform of economic recovery through fiscal responsibility, efficient management and social equity, all to be achieved through 'consensus not confrontation'. Within two months of taking office, Prime Minister Hawke convened a national economic summit of government, business and labour at Parliament House. The delegates endorsed a prices-and-incomes agreement, including the restoration of wage indexation, as the cornerstone of the approach to economic policy. The most significant part of this was the agreement with the ACTU, known as the Accord. This represented a series of trade-offs between ACTU commitments to wage restraint and industrial harmony, and ALP commitments to policies promoting full employment, welfare services and industrial revitalisation. Like the previous government, the Hawke Government espoused a policy of addressing the longer term structural issues in order to bring on economic recovery.

As Don Smart points out, 'education policy under the Hawke Labor Government from 1983 has frequently been characterised by paradox and contradiction' (Smart 1989). The triple economic problems of federal budget deficit, deteriorating international balance of trade and historically high youth unemployment were the dominant forces influencing education policies. The Hawke Government's economic policies which were directed at enhancing competitiveness and productivity, encouraging an export orientation on the part of the manufacturing sector, creating new high-tech enterprises and cutting back on public spending had a very strong influence on its education policies. In the course of implementing these policies, a number of Commonwealth Government departments came to view tertiary education as a vital infrastructure to be utilised in the pursuit of national resources. TAFE was seen as an important vehicle for improving the skill levels of the labour force and alleviating the problems of unemployment, particularly for the young unemployed. The result of these beliefs was that a number of agencies entered the field previously dominated by CTEC either by initiating new programs or gaining control of existing programs, leading to creation of the paradoxes and contradictions mentioned by Smart. Within this new environment, the traditional balance of power changed and the structures that had provided the co-ordination and synthesis of competing policies were no longer effective.

As far as tertiary education is concerned, the Hawke years fall into two distinct eras. These were from 1983 to mid-1987, when Senator Susan Ryan was Minister for Education and the period 1987 to 1991, when John Dawkins was Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The change in title is a reflection of the changes that occurred during this period.

Labour market programs

The Labor Party's economic policies came to be the driving force behind its education policies. Since the mid-1970s, successive Commonwealth Governments had sought to improve labour market conditions, particularly to resolve the politically sensitive problem of youth unemployment. Thus, the late 1970s and early 1980s saw the introduction of various labour market programs aimed at reducing the unemployment rates of 15–19 year olds. In quick succession, programs such as Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY), the Transition From School-to-Work Program, the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) and the Youth Training Program (YTP) were introduced and replaced. These programs were a combination of educational and labour market programs managed by either DEIR, the Department of Education or both.

Although there were a number of benefits from these programs, there were also a number of problems. Funding problems arose from Commonwealth control of costing methods which meant TAFE was forced to subsidise many of them. This became even more of a problem when, in 1981, DEIR began buying programs from TAFE on a fee-for-service basis. Although this started on a small scale, by 1984 the total outlay was $12.1 million, which represented a substantial proportion of the Commonwealth's total recurrent funding for TAFE.

Another complaint from the States was about the frequent changes to programs which occurred with little or no prior consultation and with very short lead times for implementation. This also meant that there was little evaluation of the effectiveness of programs because often by the time they were established sufficiently to be evaluated, they were abolished and new programs introduced. Even within the Commonwealth, there were variations in interpretation of guidelines and conflicting priorities because of different funding cycles and location of responsibility for program management within departments. The increasing tensions between CTEC, DEIR and the Department of Education in the mid-1980s only served to exacerbate this situation. Not only did the number of Commonwealth-funded labour market programs increase during the early 1980s but the number of Commonwealth bodies administering and funding these programs also increased. Robinson (1990) estimates that by 1984, eight Commonwealth bodies other than the TAFE Council were funding programs in TAFE colleges.

An important labour market program was that of pre-apprenticeship training. In 1983, as a counter-cyclical response to the thirty per cent decline in apprenticeship intakes in 1982–83, the Commonwealth initiated the funding of additional Trade-Based Pre-Employment (TBPE) courses from TAFE to maintain the general level of trade and trade-related training. Although originally intended as a one-off expansion of this type of training, funding was continued in subsequent years. The continuation of funding was a mixed blessing because of the conditions imposed by the Commonwealth. TBPE courses were very expensive to run as they were full-time trade courses and, thus, one TBPE place was equivalent in cost to four apprentice places. In order to receive funding for a set number of TBPE places, TAFE had to provide a certain number of State-funded pre-apprenticeship places. The proportion of State funded to Commonwealth funded was in the order of 4:1. This not only tended to distort TAFE's educational profile but led to tensions and conflict in the negotiation of the numbers of places to be funded each year and how much each place should cost.

Also in 1983, another new program for young people was introduced—the Participation and Equity Program (PEP). In the words of the then Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, this was designed to be:

> *the centrepiece of the overall framework of youth policies . . . The program will have the twin objectives of increasing participation in education and introducing greater equity in the government's overall provision for young people . . . government wishes to achieve a situation where, by the end of this decade, most young people complete the equivalent of a full secondary education, either in school or in a TAFE institution, or in some combination of work and education.*
> (Head 1989)

In 1984, $74 million was allocated for PEP in schools, TAFE and universities. Most of this was targeted at the approximately forty per cent of schools with the lowest retention rates, to be used to reduce the number of students leaving school prematurely.

The main objectives of the TAFE PEP program were to:

- improve TAFE's response to the education and training needs of young people, particularly those in the 15–19 year old age group
- provide for the development of special courses which would improve the quality and range of courses available to less able and unemployed young people
- expand schools/TAFE collaborative opportunities
- offer a progression of skills leading to formal recognition on completion or a basis for further education and training

PEP was the joint responsibility of DEIR, CTEC and the Department of Education with DEIR providing the income support for students, CTEC having responsibility for overseeing the delivery and the Department of Education co-ordinating and providing policy advice. Although initially announced with a fanfare, PEP went the same way as most of the other labour market programs—initial enthusiasm followed by a change of priorities. Within twelve months, PEP's funding was halved.

In late 1983, the Hawke Government's concern with structural reform of the economy, and, in particular, the issue of unemployment, led to the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs, chaired by Mr Peter Kirby. This committee had a broad charter to examine labour market policy and programs and the context in which they were developed and to recommend improvements. Rather than undertake a detailed audit of individual programs, the committee decided to focus on the fundamental philosophical, systemic and structural questions that needed to be resolved to develop a coherent framework for government intervention in the labour market.

This committee's report, which was released in January 1985, made eighty-six recommendations which were designed to set a new direction for labour market policy which would give greater emphasis to the needs of the individual for access to education, training and other support to deal with a variety of labour market conditions. The report made a number of recommendations aimed at rationalising existing programs. Many of the other recommendations were similar to those of earlier reports in that they called for better statistics and the need for improved labour market planning.

The most important recommendation, however, was the proposal for a new structured training system for young people. The report said that one of the committee's major concerns throughout the inquiry had been the inadequate recognition accorded to further education and training in the existing array of labour market programs. The committee believed that there should be more options which combined both education and work, as this would enhance the labour market prospects for individuals and add to the stock of skills in the economy. It therefore recommended the development of a system of traineeships which would combine broad-based VET in an institution with work in a related occupation to form an integrated training system. As proposed, the formal off-the-job-training component was to be a minimum of thirteen weeks, in the form of day-release for two days a week, and this training should be provided by TAFE institutions. It was also intended that graduates of the scheme would have the opportunity to progress to more advanced areas of education, training or employment if they wished.

The Australian Traineeship System (ATS) was introduced in 1985 as the cornerstone of the Commonwealth Government's Priority One Program for young people. The joint Commonwealth-State administration of the ATS was then formalised by a series of agreements, concluded during 1985–86, in which the respective roles of the Commonwealth Government and State and Territory governments were outlined. The thirteen-week off-the-job component in TAFE was regarded as integral to the ATS training package. TAFE received a $1700 fee per trainee to fund this program. The Commonwealth also provided funds for curriculum and staff development and some funds for capital purposes. As usual, an

immediate response was expected from TAFE in implementing the off-the-job-training component as the introduction of the scheme was announced in August 1985 and the first trainees were expected to be recruited at the beginning of 1986.

The primary objective of the ATS was to provide a system that borrowed the strengths of the apprenticeship system—that is, the co-ordinated combination of work and study—but without the stringent legislative obligations. Another objective was to introduce the system in areas where traditionally there had been little provision of formal training. The clerical and retail areas were two that were specially targeted. However, the success or failure of the ATS depended upon the support provided by industry and commerce, as employers would have to provide the on-the-job training. Initially, private enterprise was slow to become involved and the early traineeships were mainly in the public sector. The ATS was also as vulnerable as apprenticeships to the vagaries of the economy and, like apprenticeship, participation in the scheme fell during economic downturns. A problem for TAFE was the difficulty in negotiating changes in the fee structure as the $1700 per place was insufficient to cover costs and, once again, State Governments were forced to subsidise a Commonwealth initiative. States such as Queensland found it difficult to continue to provide traineeships in geographically isolated areas as the small numbers of trainees in each area raised the costs of delivery well above the level of the funds provided.

Other labour market programs introduced in 1985–86 in response to the Kirby committee's recommendations were a general wage subsidy scheme, Jobstart, the adult training program and the community training program. Following the Kirby committee's recommendations for changes to advisory structures for employment and training, a tripartite (government, employers and union) review of administrative and advisory structures was established. The review group submitted its report to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations in December 1985, and on 20 May 1986, the minister announced the government's intention to establish the Australian Council for Employment and Training (ACET) to advise on employment and training policy. ACET was formally established on 1 November 1986. However, it only had a short life and was abolished in 1987, only twelve months after it was created, as part of John Dawkins' restructuring of advisory bodies.

Tension existed between TAFE and DEIR because of the fundamental differences in their philosophies and functions. On the one hand, TAFE saw its function as delivering a broad vocational education which provided the skills and knowledge required to allow mobility between enterprises within a given occupation and which would provide a recognised credential. On the other hand, DEIR had a strong employment focus which emphasised short, intensive courses to provide a narrow range of vocationally specific skills. Thus, while DEIR could buy packages of education from TAFE and specify requirements, courses were developed by TAFE systems and taught in TAFE colleges by TAFE staff and therefore could not be completely separated from TAFE values. This situation was also exacerbated by the frequency of change of labour market programs and the tensions arising from the negotiations of funding for the fee-for-service courses.

Review of TAFE funding

In 1984, a major change to CTEC's approach occurred as a result of the appointment of Mr Hugh Hudson as its chairman. Hudson had a great belief in the need for cross-sectoral arrangements, which was re-inforced by the pressure being placed on CTEC for improved economies of operation in tertiary education.

As a result of these imperatives, after a decade of change in all sectors of tertiary education, CTEC undertook two major reviews in 1986. These were the *Review of TAFE funding* (May 1986) and the *Review of efficiency and effectiveness in higher education* (September 1986). Both reports documented the substantial changes which had occurred in both sectors over the decade and described the achievements that had been made in broadening access and responding to community needs. While the higher education review suggested directions for change within institutions, the TAFE review concentrated on directions for future funding.

The review of TAFE funding was undertaken because of concern that, given the radical changes and developments in TAFE over the decade, existing programs might no longer be relevant to their original objectives. As well, TAFE systems were becoming increasingly concerned with the plethora of Commonwealth programs and funding bodies which were imposing heavy administrative pressures on the States. As the New South Wales TAFE submission stated:

> *From the point of view of the State, the growth in Commonwealth funding sources outside CTEC's triennial planning process has added substantially to the administrative burdens and costs imposed upon TAFE. The complex administrative arrangements which are entailed in CTEC's triennial planning processes are compounded by the burden of liaising with a growing number of Commonwealth departments, each with its own particular administrative and accounting procedures . . . The growth of Commonwealth funding from non-CTEC sources imposes administrative costs upon TAFE at both the college and head office levels which are rarely recognised in the guidelines for particular programs.* (NSW Department of TAFE 1985, p.45)

The original recommendation of the TAFE Council was for a modest review of the form and extent of all Commonwealth funding for TAFE. The proposal was transformed by CTEC into a major inquiry in which CTEC itself, rather than the TAFE Council, set the agenda. As Robinson points out, the differences of approach between the education and employment arms of the Commonwealth came out into the open during this inquiry (Robinson 1990, p.38). The proposal being pushed by the employment arm was for the Commonwealth to buy the services it required of TAFE in place of the existing arrangement of funding through recurrent and capital grants which was supported by the education arm. However, the committee considered and rejected any major change in the division of responsibility between the Commonwealth and States for the funding of TAFE, although it did recommend considerable restructuring of grants and the arrangements under which they are provided in order 'to achieve more effectively an outcomes-oriented approach with effective accountability' (CTEC 1986, p.190).

The main proposals were for:

- a new program to be established to fund enrolment growth in TAFE in specified areas
- funding to be for four specific-purpose programs to meet identified needs of particular disadvantaged groups
- Joint Schools/TAFE Co-operative Courses to be established
- grants for quality improvement to be maintained at the existing level

Although both the TAFE Council and CTEC supported the proposed changes, the dramatic changes that occurred at the Commonwealth level in 1987, which included the demise of CTEC, meant that these recommendations were not implemented and a completely different set of funding arrangements were set in place. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

The demise of CTEC

An emerging trend in the mid-1980s was the growing interest by a number of Commonwealth departments in tertiary education. The Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce (DITAC) strongly urged a greater industry orientation in the content and types of courses offered by institutions and, together with the Department of Science, believed that higher education research facilities and expertise should be more closely linked to the private sector. DEIR believed that the training component of labour market programs should be an employment matter rather than an educational one and, thus, should be much more closely related to narrow skills training rather than the broader vocational education preferred by the education sectors. The Department of Education also started taking a more active involvement in tertiary education, particularly in PEP and with DEIR, in ATS. The Department of Finance and the Treasury considered the tertiary education sector to be an area with potential for greater efficiency and cost saving (Marshall 1988, p.23).

Between 1983 and 1986, it became increasing difficult for CTEC to perform its role. During this time, it was issued with four different sets of guidelines which became increasingly detailed in content and had the added difficulty of including a range of disparate objectives which reflected the often conflicting stances of a number of different and competing agencies. Thus, CTEC was faced with the problem of attempting to reconcile a variety of disparate objectives with insufficient funds. It was also under pressure from the Department of Finance to perform.

The government's guidelines for the 1985–1987 triennium included a request for the review of CTEC. This was undertaken by its chairman, Hugh Hudson, and the report was submitted in March 1985. The reasons given for the need for change included the voluminous reports prepared by the council, the duplication of effort between the councils and the commission and the remoteness of the commission from the institutions. It was also felt that the existing structure encouraged 'ambit bids' from the sectors and that insufficient time was spent on encouraging intersectoral developments.

The main changes proposed were the extension of CTEC's charter to cover the promotion of inter-sectoral developments; the change from statutory councils to advisory councils and consequential changes in the roles of the full-time and part-time members of the commissions and councils. These changes were accepted, and on 1 July 1986 the three councils were abolished and the advisory councils established by legislation. As far as the TAFE Advisory Council was concerned, its new role was to provide a report to the commission every three years on:

- the state of TAFE institutions and TAFE in Australia
- problems in relation to TAFE
- priorities for future developments in relation to TAFE

The major change in the legislation was that reports would no longer contain recommendations in respect of grants to be made to particular States or particular institutions.

The changes in structure were mirrored by a change in approach. In 1985, the commission had supported a 'tripartite' system consisting of three parts with soundly based but distinct roles but which would also be complementary to each other. Two years later this approach was modified to a 'trinary format in which students can avail themselves of opportunities on the basis of free movement between the three sectors' (Marshall 1988, p.114). This new position was demonstrated in 1987 with the announcement by the commission of its intention during 1988–90 to:

> *re-examine the existing division of the post-secondary education sectors in Australia, with a view to proposing new arrangements which would achieve the objectives of increased efficiency and increasing inter-institutional co-operation without damaging teaching standards.*
>
> (CTEC 1987, p.137)

However, the changes both to structure and function were not enough to save CTEC. In 1987, there was a massive restructuring of the Commonwealth Public Service with the creation of a number of 'super departments' and, as part of this move, a new department, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) was formed. This was comprised of the whole of the Department of Education, the employment divisions of DEIR, the Office of Youth Affairs (from Department of Prime Ministers and Cabinet) and the TAFE section of CTEC. As CTEC was then left with very limited functions, the decision was made in October 1987 to disband it.

Pusey points out that perhaps the most revealing of the structural changes were those that were wrought upon the former Department of Education. The most obvious change was that the amalgamation took the Education Department from Senator Susan Ryan, a member of the 'left' faction of the party and a humanities graduate, took the employment and training function from Ralph Willis, a neo-Keynesian, and put them together to form a new super department of Employment, Education and Training under John Dawkins, an economics graduate. As Pusey says, 'this shift symbolically mirrors the essence of changes in the intellectual context of what was to emerge in their education policies' (Pusey 1991, p.147).

This move is also a good example of Peter Wilenski's statement that 'many of the really important reforms of administration are basically political in character and that this political aspect is often hidden because the political nature of administration is hidden' (Wilenski 1979).

For TAFE, the shift of the locus of power from CTEC to the new department meant that through the Commonwealth funding mechanisms, there was much greater ministerial control and influence than there had been in the past.

The demise of CTEC meant the end of a very important era in tertiary education. As Pusey points out:

> *Through the membership of these statutory bodies Canberra federal governments for two decades, had drawn on the best advice of a cross-section of experts and organisations with interests in education; with these resources, they had augmented the capacity of their own staff to make informed decisions about education policy.* (Pusey 1991, p.148)

Another consequence quoted by Pusey is the comment by a long-since-retired chairman of one of the commissions that 'the whole system has lost its corporate memory' (Pusey 1991, p.148).

Although some of CTEC's methods may have been cumbersome, CTEC did at least have a co-operative rather than a confrontationist approach to both the States and the various sectors of education. The triennial planning process, although time-consuming, did at least allow a national picture to emerge and an opportunity for State's policies and priorities to be recognised and to be taken into account in the development of national policies. The inclusion of TAFE Directors on the council and the advisory council again meant a State TAFE perspective was provided, something sadly lacking in subsequent advisory structures. Although the establishment of DEET had the potential to rationalise the conflicting Commonwealth policy objectives, it also had the potential to exacerbate tensions between the Commonwealth and the States as its view of the development of national policies for education was a 'top down' approach of imposing its policies on the States rather than the co-operative approach favoured by CTEC.

The Australian Conference of TAFE directors

The early 1980s were important years for the development of TAFE as they saw the growth of national co-operation between the State systems. This was largely achieved through the efforts of the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors (ACTD). ACTD had its origins in the Second World War meetings of State officers who met to co-ordinate the Technical Training Scheme. Following the Kangan report and the growth of the State TAFE systems, it had developed as a strong, co-operative and influential group.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, ACTD established a number of standing committees, working parties and special interest networks to undertake special projects, provide policy advice and to work together in specific areas of national importance to develop more consistent and integrated policies, programs and strategies. These groups included the Curriculum Projects Steering Group (CPSG), the Building Officers Group (BOG), the Classification of Courses Committee, the Joint Committee on TAFE Statistics (JCTAFES), the National Working Party of Women's Advisers in TAFE (NWPWAT) and the Staff Development Working Party. A number of these working parties and committees also included a representative from the Commonwealth.

The major functions of ACTD were to:

- to provide a national focus for TAFE
- to provide a national point of contact for other educational and industry bodies
- to develop national policy stances, submissions to national inquiries and responses to reports of national inquiries
- to encourage the development of national consistency of standards across the State TAFE systems

There were a number of major projects that were undertaken by ACTD during the early 1980s. One of these was, at the request of the AEC, the development of a detailed proposal for the establishment of a National Centre for TAFE research. Although the stimulus for this request was the recommendation made by the Williams committee Report on Education, Training and Employment, this idea had first been proposed by the Kangan committee which recommended that:

> *An Australian TAFE Technology Centre should be established as a company limited by guarantee for the purposes of adapting technology to vocational education and of researching, developing and producing learning and other educational aids by itself or through others. The Centre should also serve as the Clearinghouse for relevant research, disseminate information from abroad, commission relevant research, publish a journal, arrange where appropriate for the publication of textbooks, admit for periods of training administrators and other persons with experience in technical and further education and arrange such other matters as may be desirable from time to time. Finance should be provided through the Australian Minister for Education in such a way as to make the Centre financially accountable to him, but otherwise the Company should operate on business like lines and attempt to break even on production activities.* (ACOTAFE 1974, p.xxxvii)

The proposal developed by ACTD was accepted by the AEC in June 1980, and the centre was established in Adelaide and became operational in November 1981. As recommended in the Kangan report, the centre was established as a company whose members were the Commonwealth and State Ministers for Education. The centre also had a board of directors whose members represented TAFE, industry and unions. Funding was provided by the Commonwealth Government and State Governments. Although the centre started initially by undertaking and commissioning research, over the years its activities have expanded so that, today, they encompass practically all the functions proposed in the Kangan report. In 1985, the centre assumed responsibility for the National TAFE Clearinghouse system which had been established in 1980 to develop a database of, and clearinghouse for, TAFE research documents.

Two important ACTD initiatives were the development of national core curricula under the direction of CPSG, established in 1982, and the development of a system for collection of national TAFE statistics. CPSG was established to develop national core curricula as a means of promoting national consistency in course content, sharing expertise and reducing costs of course development. This committee later changed its name to the Australian Committee on TAFE Curriculum (ACTC) and, in 1991, to the Australian Committee on Training Curriculum (ACTRAC). The Joint Committee on TAFE Statistics, which included a representative from the TAFE Council, developed, administered and monitored a system for the collection of national TAFE statistics.

However, perhaps the most important achievement of ACTD was the development of a new system of classification of TAFE courses and a new, and nationally consistent, nomenclature of TAFE awards. In 1973, ACOTAFE carried out a survey of technical colleges with the assistance of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). For the purpose of the survey, the committee classified the educational activities of technical colleges into six main academic streams. However, almost from the beginning there was considerable dissatisfaction within TAFE with this system as it was believed that it did not adequately reflect the educational characteristics of TAFE courses.

In 1980, a Working Group on Classification of Courses was established by the ACTD. In 1982, a report was completed which recommended that a two-dimensional classification be retained

and that it consist of revised streams and fields. The new stream classification system involved four main categories of courses which were divided into nineteen sub-categories.

The four main streams were:

Stream 1000 Courses for recreation, leisure and personal enrichment
Stream 2000 Courses for entry to employment or further education
Stream 3000 Initial vocational courses
Stream 4000 Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course

After the new system was approved at the ACTD meeting of November 1983, work began on the development of a new system of TAFE awards. In 1982, a new working party prepared a comprehensive analysis of awards and nomenclature used by TAFE authorities in all States and Territories. The working party found that while substantial similarity existed between the criteria used to determine the appropriate award for a course of study, there was little correlation between the forms of nomenclature used for the awards. To overcome this problem and to provide portability of awards, it was agreed that there were two issues which needed to be considered in introducing a new system. These were the desirability of having uniformity of nomenclature in TAFE throughout Australia and the desirability of establishing comparability and compatibility of the nomenclature of TAFE awards with those of other sectors of tertiary education.

The major considerations that were taken into account when formulating the recommendations for the new system were that the mobility of the Australian population, the movement towards national industrial awards and the growth in the number of firms operating in more than one State contributed to the need for uniformity in TAFE provision across Australia. TAFE was already attempting to respond to the need for consistency by developing national core curricula in appropriate subject areas and by the establishment of the new classification system. The adoption of a uniform system of nomenclature across States was seen to represent a further, positive move towards national consistency. It was also seen to be important to link TAFE awards with other tertiary education awards.

At the April 1984 meeting of the ACTD, agreement was reached on a new model of nomenclature. The main feature of this model was that awards for courses were assigned on the basis of their stream classification. Thus:

3600	*Diploma*
3500/3400	*Associate Diploma*
3300	*Advanced Certificate*
3200	*Certificate*
3100/2000	*Statement of Attainment*
1000	*Statement of attainment*
4000	*Endorsement of Awards*

This model was referred to the June 1984 meeting of the AEC for endorsement. The ministers decided to establish a task force to consider the proposals in the context of the existing awards system in the advanced education sector. The task force was to report back with firm recommendations for the implementation of a national system of TAFE awards which, together with the system of advanced education awards, would form a coherent system of awards across the two sectors.

As a result of the recommendations of the task force, the AEC resolved that:

- a nomenclature of awards be adopted for courses in the streams of TAFE
- the assessment and accreditation of courses should remain a State/Territory responsibility
- a national register of TAFE courses should be established
- an Australian Council of Tertiary Awards (ACTA) should be established to develop and maintain a national register of tertiary courses

- with respect to TAFE, ACTA should have the following functions:
  (a) to promote consistency throughout Australia in the application of the proposed nomenclature model for TAFE awards
  (b) to establish and maintain liaison with the accrediting authority for TAFE courses in each State and Territory
  (c) to provide an information service in connection with the courses and awards offered
  (d) to establish, maintain and publish a national register of TAFE courses
  (e) to issue guidelines for the registration and periodic re-registration of TAFE courses
  (f) to monitor adherence to these guidelines
- with respect to advanced education, ACTA would assume the responsibilities of the Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE) which had been established in 1971 to provide national registration of advanced education awards

The establishment of the new classification system and the new award system marked a major advance in the development of a national TAFE structure and philosophy. Although the rights of the States remained paramount, a start had been made to develop a national TAFE ethos. The establishment of ACTA and the inclusion of advanced education and TAFE in a national tertiary system of awards, resolved issues relating to paraprofessional awards in TAFE and the advanced education sector and also marked the beginning of attempts to develop an articulated system of tertiary education.

Another important achievement of ACTD was the improvement of financial support for TAFE students. There were major anomalies between arrangements for advanced education and higher education students and those for TAFE students. Unlike other tertiary education students, whose main source of assistance was TEAS, TAFE students were faced with a bewildering array of income support schemes. Although most full-time students were eligible to apply for TEAS, those in the Stream 5 (Preparatory courses) were specifically excluded. Those students doing adult matriculation courses were eligible to apply for ASEAS. Students enrolled in Commonwealth-funded English for Specific Purposes Programs were eligible for a special allowance, although those in State-funded courses were not only ineligible for the special allowance but were also ineligible for TEAS. Students enrolled in the Commonwealth Labour Market programs received other training allowances. In addition, the Commonwealth had provided special funds to universities and CAEs for loan funds for emergency financial assistance to students. TAFE students, who generally came from lower socio-economic backgrounds, had no such safety net.

The main reason that these anomalies had occurred was that the existing income support schemes had been developed without any consideration of the needs and characteristics of the TAFE sector as TAFE was seen as catering predominantly for part-time students. TEAS was developed to assist university and advanced education students, and TAFE students appeared to have been added as an afterthought. ASEAS was aimed purely at assisting students to gain entry to higher education institutions. The training schemes, and allowances, concentrated mainly on employment, with little or no reference to the VET implications. The lack of co-ordination between the schemes was also a reflection of the lack of co-ordination of policies and programs within the Commonwealth.

ACTD took this matter up both with the Commonwealth Department of Education and with AEC. As a result of the identification of these problems and pressure from ACTD for change, when the new system of financial assistance for students, AUSTUDY, was introduced, the major anomalies had been reduced. However, the absence of funding for emergency financial assistance remained.

The achievements outlined above were very important steps in the development of a national TAFE system and the strengthening of links between the separate TAFE authorities. ACTD was extremely successful in replacing eight discrete TAFE systems with a more integrated set of national policies and more co-ordinated national statistical, curriculum and qualification arrangements.

7 The late 1980s

Introduction

The period from 1987 to 1989 was a time of unparalleled change for all sectors of education. For schools, there was a significant push from within the Commonwealth Government to increase Australia's traditionally poor retention rates to Year 12. There were also moves towards development of national core curricula and national standards testing. For higher education, there was a total shake up which led to the dissolution of the binary system through the amalgamation of the advanced education sector with the universities. For TAFE, there was the effects of award restructuring, the move towards competency-based training (CBT) and changed funding arrangements. At the Commonwealth level, there was a major change in the national advisory structures. For all sectors of education, the years 1987–90 were ones of dislocation and constant restructuring. These changes were the result of the national economic imperatives and the strong interventionist policies of the then Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins.

The basis of the economic difficulties facing Australia was the trade problems of the mid-1980s which led to sharp falls in the terms of trade in 1985 and 1986 and a marking down of the value of Australia's commodity exports. This then contributed to a decline in the current account and a growth in foreign debt. The deterioration in Australia's external position highlighted the need for structural adjustment of industry to make it more efficient and competitive. It was also recognised that structural change would generate new demands for high value-added products and services which would be intensive in their demands upon knowledge and skills. The necessity to compete effectively in international markets would demand significant improvements in national productivity performance, involving the introduction of new technologies and new forms of work organisation. This led to a new appreciation of the importance of human resources and skills to national economic performance as Australia would require a flexible and highly skilled workforce in order to be able to maximise productivity, produce quality goods and exploit new technologies and market opportunities.

It was believed that changes to work organisation and new technology would require a change in the mix of skills which an individual would need to acquire. There would be a greater need for higher level cognitive and problem-solving skills, together with social skills which fostered teamwork and leadership. These would need to be combined with the more traditional motor skills. The term 'multi-skilling' was used to denote the need to ensure that the labour force acquired both a wider range and a higher level of skills. There was also a recognition of the need for education and training of adults throughout their working life.

These factors set the context within which the ACTU and the Commonwealth Government formulated proposals for changes to VET within Australia. There were two seminal reports released in the mid-1980s which set the agenda for change. These were the ACTU's report, *Australia reconstructed*, and a report circulated by John Dawkins called *Skills for Australia*.

Australia reconstructed

In 1986, the ACTU discussed with the Minister for Trade, John Dawkins, the desirability of a fact-finding mission to a number of European countries which had grappled with problems similar to those being experienced by Australia. In particular, the ACTU was interested in visiting those countries which had overcome balance of payments constraints in ways which

produced low unemployment, low inflation and economic growth which was more equitably distributed.

The mission's report examined, and made recommendations about, macroeconomic policies; wages, prices and incomes; trade and industrial policy; the labour market; industrial democracy and strategic unionism. The section of the report on 'Labour Market and Training Policies' was of particular importance to education and training. It stated that 'one of Australia's overriding concerns must be its deficient skills base as Australia's future international competitiveness would depend largely on how successful it is in creating advantages based on its ability to exploit up-to-date knowledge and skills-intensive products and processes. Success in a world of rapidly changing technologies will require a constant effort to acquire and develop state-of-the-art skills' (ACTU/TDC Mission to Western Europe 1987). This view formed the basic tenet of Commonwealth Government policies and programs for the next decade.

The report also highlighted the low proportion of teenagers engaged in various kinds of post-secondary education and the large number of young Australians who, through unemployment, were denied access to skills training through either work or education. Problems of entry and re-entry into the labour market and school-to-work transition were also identified. It was pointed out that there was a need for Australia to achieve further increases in retention rates. In addition, it was proposed that curricula designed for university entry and the courses for labour market entry should share a common core of skill content. All these issues were raised in the Finn Review of Post-compulsory Education, five years later.

There was also evidence that Australia was not producing the right skills as well as not producing enough skilled people.

The three main priority areas were:

- the need for greater participation in education and training to raise the general level of literacy and numeracy of young Australians, as well as to facilitate the introduction and use of advanced technologies, procedures and services in industry
- 'equality of access' in education and training should be pursued to reduce the disparities in the level of education and skills of the young workforce
- the need for action to be taken to improve skills in communications and numeracy; to ensure Australia's young workers have a higher technological awareness and are adept in current technology; to promote more education and training in business and management skills; and to promote more cross-disciplinary study and training

The report also accused management in Australia of not supporting on-the-job training (other than through apprenticeships) and of not providing the required level of investment in skill formation.

There was also a high degree of labour market segmentation in Australia that was totally indefensible on efficiency and equity grounds. It was pointed out that structural barriers preventing the full participation of women in the labour market must be removed if Australia was to become internationally competitive.

Although most of these issues were not new, indeed many of them had been raised in every government report since, and including the Kangan report, this report proved to be significant in that it provided the framework for the Commonwealth's future education and training policies.

Skills for Australia

The foreword of the 1987 report, *Skills for Australia*, set out the government's new agenda by saying:

> *the government is determined that our education and training systems should play an active role in responding to the major economic challenges now facing Australia.* (Dawkins 1987, p.iii)

Specifically, action was required to:

- increase the total level of participation in education and training and expand the national training capacity
- improve the quality and flexibility of education and training systems, and hence the quality, breadth and adaptability of skills acquired
- improve the distribution and balance of the national education and training effort, to better meet the long-term needs of the economy and labour market
- raise the level of private sector investment in training and skills formation
- improve the employment and training opportunities available to the unemployed and otherwise disadvantaged members of the community
  - including measures to reduce the high degree of occupational segregation in the labour market and to improve training opportunities for women
- increase the productivity of education and training resources and evaluate the outputs achieved from the use of those resources

The report announced a major restructuring of Commonwealth assistance for TAFE, to take effect from 1 January 1988. This involved the combining of the Capital Grants, Special Equipment and TAFE Minor Works and Equipment Programs for Traineeships into a single TAFE Infrastructure Program. Funds were to be allocated on the basis of competitive bidding, with individual proposals being considered on their merits. The Fees Reimbursement and Designated Recurrent Grants were to be replaced by a General Recurrent Program which would be subject to Resource Agreements with the States covering a commitment to:

- pursue improvements in productivity, including terms and conditions of staff employment
- agreed target growth rates in designated courses of high priority to meet skill shortages, equity objectives, or areas of strategic importance to future economic development
- changes in administrative arrangements to retain revenues from entrepreneurial effort

The change in funding arrangements for TAFE did not occur without some resistance by some States. The New South Wales Minister for Education, Rodney Cavalier, for example, refused to sign the resource agreement (although this was signed immediately by his successor following the change of government) because the change was announced as a *fait accompli*, without prior consultation with the States. Certainly the intention of the resource agreement—to reduce the number of funding categories and to free up how these funds were spent—was a change the States had been wanting for some time. However, the way this change was made was seen by the States as yet another example of the Commonwealth imposing its wishes on the States without due consultation and with no regard to the States' own policies and priorities.

The establishment of the National Board of Employment Education and Training

As part of the process of integrating the development of its employment, education and training programs, the government appointed a task force, chaired by Mr Charles Halton, to review and report on advisory arrangements and structures to complement the establishment of the new Department of Employment, Education and Training. The task force reported back at the end of 1987 and recommended the establishment of a new advisory body, the National Board of Employment Education and Training (NBEET).

NBEET was established by the Employment, Education and Training Act 1988, which came into effect on 1 July 1988. This Act also repealed the Commonwealth Schools Commission Act 1973, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission Act 1977 and the Commonwealth

Employment Service Act 1978. The board was established with a two-tiered structure of the board itself and four specialist constituent councils. These councils were:

- *The Schools Council* which was responsible for advising the board on primary and secondary education, including general development, funding and the identification of priorities for staffing and facilities
- *The Higher Education Council* which was responsible for advising the board on higher education, including its general development, funding, consultation with institutions on educational profiles, and identification of priorities for staffing and facilities
- *The Employment and Skills Formation Council* which was responsible for advising the board on matters relating to employment, TAFE (including TAFE funding); skills formation policies, programs and services; and the promotion of effective training in business and industry
- *The Australian Research Council* which was responsible for advising the board on national research priorities and the co-ordination of research policy, including support for fundamental research, the development and implementation of research programs and ways to enhance research personnel training and the interaction of the research sectors involved

The role of the board was to undertake inquiries into relevant issues in response to references from the minister and on its own motion and to draw together and integrate the operations and advice of the four councils.

The board was established to have up to thirteen members drawn from various sections of the community with experience or expertise in employment, education, training or research. The chairs of the four councils were members of the board and four other members of the board were also council members so that each council had two board members. Of the thirteen board members, the legislation required that two persons be drawn from business or industry, two from trade unions and at least seven from the areas of education, training, science or technology.

Although NBEET and its councils seemed to have adequate representation from the higher education and schools sector, representation from the TAFE sector was noticeably lacking. Not only did the term 'TAFE' not appear in the title of any of the councils, but also there was not one TAFE representative on the board itself, and only one TAFE officer, a nominee of the Australian TAFE Principals Association, on the Employment and Skills Formation Council (ESFC). Despite consultation with the chairman of the task force, the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors was not represented on the council. At a national conference held in 1988, the deputy chair of the board stated that:

> *TAFE is not specifically identified in the Council sub-structure of the Board. I suspect this is because TAFE has a role both in higher education and in employment and skills formation.*
>
> (Ramsey 1989, p.83)

However, as TAFE was not represented on the Higher Education Council either, it is hard to see how TAFE was in a position to provide any sort of policy input to either higher education or skills formation. The replacement of CTEC by NBEET meant that TAFE (unlike the other sectors of education) no longer had any direct input to the major national advisory process.

Consequently, both NBEET and the ESFC were regarded as irrelevant to TAFE, and the exclusion of TAFE from the national advisory mechanism did not help national and State relationships. Consultation at a national level was subsequently with DEET, which had the operational responsibility for policies, programs and funding.

The restructuring of higher education

Although TAFE had felt the initial impact of the reforming zeal of the new minister through the change in funding arrangements and its exclusion from NBEET, it was the higher

education sector that felt the full brunt of the reform process. This was presumably because higher education institutions were more vulnerable than TAFE and school education because they were fully Commonwealth funded. Whereas the Commonwealth could only directly affect the margins of the other two sectors, and try to set in place strategies and policies for longer term change, through its funding mechanisms, the Commonwealth was in a strong position to make fundamental changes to higher education.

Two papers by John Dawkins prompted the restructuring of the higher education sector at the end of the 1980s: the 'Green Paper' *Higher education: A policy discussion paper* and the 'White Paper', *Higher education: A policy statement*.

Although the main impact of the white paper was felt by higher education institutions, there were some implications for TAFE. The paper pointed out that TAFE shares with higher education the major responsibility for post-school or tertiary education in Australia. Both the green paper and the white paper canvassed a number of options to foster closer links between TAFE and higher education. These were to recognise and expand the legitimate role of TAFE in providing higher education courses on its own account, to make selected use of TAFE facilities in assisting students taking courses offered by a higher education institution and to foster closer links between TAFE and higher education in matters such as course articulation and credit transfer.

The first of these proposals was in line with the changes that had already started occurring within TAFE following the implementation of the new system of awards and the establishment of ACTA. The proposed abolition of the binary system and the amalgamation of advanced education institutions with universities meant that once this process was completed, higher education institutions were likely to progressively withdraw from the provision of associate diploma and diploma courses. As happened in New South Wales in 1949 and again in 1965, this would leave a gap in provision that, once again, TAFE would be expected to fill. However, in its response to the green paper, ACTD did stress that it would not wish to see the emphasis placed on its higher level programs at the expense of its other provisions.

The proposal that higher education institutions make selected use of TAFE facilities was one that was approached with caution by TAFE institutions because of the potential impact on an already inadequate infrastructure of student services. This was one area that TAFE systems would deal with on an individual basis, through negotiations with the relevant higher education institution. Victoria, for example, had a long history of joint TAFE/ higher education institutions and would be more likely to become involved in further development of this process.

The proposals regarding articulation and credit transfer were supported very strongly by TAFE, as it had been trying for some time to negotiate credit transfer arrangements with higher education institutions with mixed success.

The two papers also raised, but did not resolve, the question of what should be the balance of provision between higher education and TAFE.

Both the green and white papers argued the case for fewer, larger institutions in Australia's higher education system. The establishment of the *Unified National System* resulted in the demise of the CAEs as they either became universities (e.g. the NSW Institute of Technology became the University of Technology, Sydney) or were subsumed by one or divided up among several universities.

Industrial award restructuring

While the Dawkins reforms had a dramatic effect on higher education, the changes affecting TAFE were more insidious, possibly because TAFE systems were mainly State funded and major changes could only be introduced through agreement of the States with Commonwealth policy directions and through Commonwealth funding of specific programs.

One area of Commonwealth reform which had a considerable effect on both State industrial relations and TAFE systems was industrial award restructuring.

In the August 1988 National Wage case, the Federal Industrial Relations Commission determined that wage increases should be conditional upon unions agreeing to participate in a review of industrial awards 'to improve efficiency of industry and provide workers with access to more varied, fulfilling and better paid jobs' (Training Costs Review Committee 1990, p.19). It was established that these reviews would be guided by the centrepiece of the new wages system, the Structural Efficiency Principle. This decision was of great significance as it linked salary increases with the acquisition of higher levels of skill. In May 1989, the commission confirmed that award restructuring would remain the basis of the wages system and also agreed to a major restructuring of Australian industrial awards and working conditions. This decision involved a major review of training arrangements and infrastructure.

A paper by John Dawkins, released in 1988, called *A changing workforce*, outlined the implications of award restructuring for education and training. The paper pointed out that training takes place in an industrial relations framework and reflects the work organisation and occupational structures determined by that framework. Occupations and, consequently, training arrangements are rigidly defined by both horizontal and vertical segmentation, as well as along rigid gender lines. These features frequently inhibit the development of both entry and advanced training arrangements necessary to meet changing skill needs. The paper said that in most areas of industry, the number of job classifications and the demarcations between them must be reduced. This would allow training to be more broadly based and to have a multi-skilled approach. It was also pointed out that structured training arrangements did not exist for a large number of occupations, particularly those in traditionally female occupations (Dawkins, 1988).

The paper made several statements that have since been accepted by both State and Commonwealth training regulators as the major principles which should drive Australia's VET system. The first was the need to change from a 'time-served' system, such as apprenticeship, to a 'competency based' approach where entry to 'qualified' status is based on achieving specified standards of skill. There was also recognition of the need for diversification, as well as the expansion and improvement, of Australia's training infrastructure through greater emphasis on industry-based formal training provision. This was seen to be a means of providing competition for TAFE and would act as a major spur to increased efficiency, quality and relevance of formal training provision.

In line with the recommendations in the ACTU's *Australia reconstructed*, this paper also stated the need for direct industry investment in the education and training system. Two possible mechanisms were identified for formalising the required increased contributions by industry to training costs. These were:

(a) acceptance by industry of responsibility to provide for the funding of increased training, particularly as part of award restructuring processes; and/or

(b) the establishment, by legislation, of a framework for training funds to be financed by industry, which would also have the primary responsibility for the effective use of those funds

Once again, the issue of the need for action to bring greater consistency to the separate training systems of the States and Territories was raised. The major inconsistencies were seen to be in the form of structured training arrangements for individual occupations, the length of training, formal curricula and recognition of basic skill levels. These policy directions were included in the resource agreements negotiated with the States.

The National Training Board

Following the release of a statement called *Improving Australia's training system* in April 1989, John Dawkins convened a special conference of relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory

ministers with responsibility for VET. The key decision reached at the conference was agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories to support and accelerate the adoption of CBT. To this end it was agreed that a National Training Board (NTB) should be established to take responsibility for the setting of national skill standards. Ministers agreed that the Commonwealth, States and Territories would operate within the terms of those standards. The board's members would be drawn from the Commonwealth, all States and Territories and employers and unions. The NTB commenced operations in April 1990. The NTB was established to operate under a memorandum of understanding whereby the ministers agreed to provide and accredit vocational education nationwide within the framework of national competency standards.

The board's main role was to assist industry to develop and then endorse national competency standards for occupations and classifications in industry or enterprise awards or agreements as the basis for the introduction of CBT. By CBT was meant the provision of certification as a result of proving competence rather than the completion of a training course. Through CBT, a trainee would be assessed against agreed standards of a particular industry rather than being assessed on achievement relative to other trainees over a period of time. Employers could be confident that receipt of certification of job competency was based on current needs in an industry, consistent with national standards and equally valid in all parts of Australia. This also meant that an individual's prior learning would be recognised, regardless of where and how it was acquired. The linchpin of the system as proposed and endorsed was the development and ratification of national competency standards, designed to establish a direct link between the competencies required in particular occupations and industrial classifications and formal vocational education qualifications.

The NTB developed a framework to classify competency standards developed by industry. Known as the Australian Standards Framework (ASF), it was designed to establish reference points so that standards related to the range of competencies required in particular occupations and classifications on the one hand and formal educational qualifications on the other. The framework had six levels for classifying work-based competencies and a further two levels covering professional competencies.

The NTB also became involved in the Training Guarantee Scheme. The concept of a training guarantee was first raised in the 1988 discussion paper *Industry training in Australia: The need for change* (NBEET 1989). The legislation came into force on 1 July 1990. Its aim was to:

> *increase the quantity and quality of industry training by ensuring that employers with a payroll above $200 000 spend at least a specified minimum amount on structured training, broadly defined. As the scheme is targeted at employers who currently spend nothing or very little on training, it will also ensure a more equitable distribution of effort in relation to employee-related training among employers* (DEET 1990, p.10)

The legislation required employers to spend at least one per cent of payroll in 1990–91 and 1.5 per cent from 1 July 1992 on quality, employment-related training that would most benefit their business.

The NTB, as the Training Advisory Body under the Act, was given the functions of registering, de-registering and supervising the Registered Industry Training Agents (RITAs), giving certificates in some cases to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), to RITAs and to employers and advising the Minister for Employment, Education and Training on regulatory guidelines.

The role of RITAs was to advise employers of eligible training and categories of training expenditure and issue training advisory certificates which indicated to the ATO that the training and education expenditure met the requirements of the Act. Employers who failed to spend the required minimum on eligible training activities were required to furnish a statement to the ATO and pay a charge equal to any shortfall. In 1990–91, the ATO collected $3.7 million from 1500 employers who failed to meet their training obligations under the Act. However, little of this money was spent directly on training as it was divided up between the ATO, DEET and the NTB to cover administrative costs (Bita 1992).

Conclusion

John Dawkins managed to achieve massive changes to the Australian education and training system in a very short period of time. Between 1986 and 1990, he managed to set in place the structure for a new higher education system, change the basis of the industrial relations system and establish the guidelines which would significantly change the structure and processes of the VET system.

As Peter Karmel pointed out, the abolition of CTEC and its replacement by NBEET with its four councils was clearly an assertion of ministerial power. NBEET and its councils were strictly advisory, had no administrative responsibilities and had only a small staff. The strength of CTEC was due largely to the knowledge it built up through administering the programs it recommended. This knowledge influenced the advice it gave on priorities and desirable developments. Karmel saw the divorce of policy advice from program administration as 'a recipe for its irrelevance' (Karmel 1989, p.12).

The changes which moved the management of programs away from a statutory authority and into the hands of DEET meant that the new consultative arrangements became direct bilateral dealings between individual institutions and departmental officials. Although these arrangements were supposed to result in less interference with the internal management of institutions and less regulation, in practice it meant more of each.

The special ministerial conference had considerable implications for TAFE. As well as endorsing the introduction of CBT and the establishment of the NTB, ministers also agreed to endorse the Commonwealth's strategy for reform of arrangements for the recognition of overseas qualifications, reaffirm the importance of the ATS and apprenticeship as mainstream entry-level training systems and to co-operate in appropriate reforms of entry-level training. These agreements not only had a profound effect on the future direction of VET but also had an effect on the restructuring of TAFE systems which was occurring across Australia.

8 Restructuring of State TAFE systems

Introduction

The period 1986–92 was a period of constant change of both structure and governance within State TAFE systems. This brings to mind the words of Petronius in AD 66:

> *We trained hard . . . but every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising . . . and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing inefficiency and demoralisation.*

As well as feeling the impact of new Commonwealth VET policies, TAFE systems were also affected by State and Territory government policies. During this period, there was a general trend to remove TAFE from the education portfolios and incorporate it within employment and training portfolios. Although this had a superficial similarity to the changes that took place with the Commonwealth Government with the creation of DEET, each State restructured in a different way. The historical differences between State TAFE systems continued to affect how they responded to the new challenges.

Northern Territory

In 1980, the Northern Territory Government established the Northern Territory Vocational Training Commission to coincide with the commencement of the Industries Training Act 1979. The commission replaced the Apprentices Board and was a tripartite body. A major amendment of the Act in 1982 transferred from the Education Department responsibility for:

(i) formulation of policy and planning for TAFE

(ii) provision of advice to the minister on the co-ordination of policy and planning of TAFE activities in the Territory

(iii) preparation of co-ordinated funding proposals and advice to the minister for general funding and building needs in relation to both Commonwealth and Territory sources of funds for TAFE

(iv) responsibility for evaluation and accreditation of TAFE courses

However, operational functions for TAFE remained with the Department of Education and the Darwin Community College, which in 1984 became known as the Darwin Institute of Technology.

In 1984, the chief minister instigated the reorganisation of post-secondary education in the Northern Territory. Under the new structure, the Vocational Training Commission's education and training functions for TAFE were transferred back to the Education Department. These functions included TAFE policy and planning; accreditation of TAFE courses; planning of Aboriginal employment and training and operation of the Territory's Training Centre. With these changes, the department's TAFE Division became the TAFE authority for the Northern Territory. Advice to the minister on essential TAFE matters was to be provided by the TAFE Advisory Council, which was chaired by the secretary of the department and included representatives of college councils, industry and unions. One of the aims of the reorganisation was to give various post-secondary institutions greater decision-making powers, and, so, the Northern Territory of Australia Act 1985 transferred powers from the department to the councils of the Darwin Institute of Technology, Katherine Rural College, Batchelor College and the Community College of Central Australia.

In December 1985, the University College of the Northern Territory was created by an Act of the Northern Territory Government. This was to be financed entirely by the Territory Government in the early years since the Commonwealth Government declined to provide the funding for this purpose before 1991 at the earliest. The Northern Territory Government entered into a contract with the University of Queensland for the awarding of degrees until the college became an independent university.

Following the release of the green and white papers on higher education, the government decided to legislate for a Northern Territory University which would assume responsibility for the courses previously taught by both the University College and the Darwin Institute of Technology. As the Darwin Institute of Technology included a TAFE component, the new university (which commenced operation in 1989) became the first university in Australia to offer both higher education and TAFE courses through the Institute of TAFE.

In 1988, executive powers in relation to TAFE matters were delegated to the Secretary of Education. The Education Act provided for a Technical and Education Advisory Council whose role was subsumed by a new training authority, the Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority (NTETA). This authority had four advisory councils—the Accreditation and Registration Advisory Council, the Employment and Training Needs Planning Advisory Council, the Planning and Resources Advisory Council and the Aboriginal Programs Employment Training Advisory Council. The authority reported directly to the Minister for Education and the Arts on a range of issues, including the allocation of funds and resources, capital works and policy priorities. It also worked closely with the Department of Education, the Northern Territory University and the TAFE colleges to enhance training opportunities, co-ordinate programs and arrange credit between institutions.

As part of these new arrangements, the existing TAFE Division was renamed the Post Secondary Education and Training Division. Its deputy secretary had responsibility for the International Project Management Unit, Employment and Training Branch and the NT Office of Tertiary Education. Delegated authority for the delivery of TAFE courses remained with the NT Open College of TAFE, Batchelor College, Alice Springs College of TAFE, NT Rural College and the Institute of TAFE (Northern Territory University). Each college had a council which conducted the affairs of its college and was responsible for efficient and effective administration and financial and physical resource management.

Victoria

On 19 December 1985, the Victorian Minister for Education, Ian Cathie, announced that an in-principle decision had been taken to transfer all TAFE provision from schools to the direct control of the various TAFE colleges in Victoria. It was planned that, by 1987, the schools in which TAFE programs were conducted should relate to the TAFE Board in one of two ways. The first of these was the 'college campus' model, which was to be used where the TAFE provision in a school was substantial and where the facilities used for TAFE purposes could be separately identified. Teachers involved in the delivery of TAFE programs would have the opportunity to transfer to the TAFE teaching service. The second way was the 'college cluster' model which would allow TAFE programs at a school to be offered on an agency basis for the appropriate college of TAFE. Under this model, staff and facilities would continue to be supplied by the Schools Division. This decision was historic in that the Schools Division would no longer be recognised as a provider of TAFE in Victoria. This announcement also marked the abolition of the 113-year-old Victorian Education Department and the establishment of a new Ministry of Education.

In November 1987, the Division of Further Education came into existence as a result of the Ministerial Review of Further Education in Victoria (the Edgar report). This division had direct responsibility for identifying the need for further education in Victoria and for developing strategies to meet that need. The division had specific responsibility for the development of policy in relation to adult literacy and basic education, whether conducted by community providers or in TAFE colleges. It also had responsibility for migrant language

programs provided by TAFE, the Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) or community providers.

November 1987 also saw the replacement of the TAFE Board by the State Training Board (STB). This was established by the Victorian Government to bring together the administration of the TAFE college system with the training responsibilities of the Department of Labour and the Industrial Training Commission of Victoria. The STB's mission statement was to:

> *Develop a flexible and relevant training system which can assist industry, unions and government by providing a highly skilled and flexible work force essential for economic and social development. The Board will develop relevant training opportunities for the workforce and community in general and for labour disadvantaged groups in particular.* (Ministry of Education 1987, p.8)

The main objectives of the STB were to:

- review and reform the industry advisory structure so as to give accurate, adequate and timely advice on the training needs of industry, the community and government
- encourage industry and training providers to jointly assume a leading role in the training system
- subsume the existing 100 current sub-committees currently providing this advice
- take an industry rather than an occupational approach to the planning of training

The board also had a mandate to develop a more responsive TAFE system which would include industry representation in central planning, industry involvement in college governance and effective and constructive co-operation between the Office of the State Training Board, college councils and college directors.

Other objectives included the reform of the legislation in relation to training, the implementation of college performance agreements, improving access to training, the development of a data base in relation to skill shortages and training needs and the development of industry training foundations. The board also had responsibility for the development of management systems for both the Office of the State Training Board and training providers which would include preparation of individual training plans, the implementation of a TAFE management service within colleges and the State training system and for encouraging the entrepreneurial activity of colleges.

The new State training system therefore was comprised of:

- the State Training Board and the Office of the State Training Board
- a network of TAFE colleges
- non-TAFE college providers of VET
- industry training boards
- industry networks and skills centres located in TAFE colleges and private industry

The board assumed the responsibilities of the TAFE Board and these were delegated to the general manager of the STB. The twelve members of the board were appointed by the government and included representatives from employer groups, trade unions and education bodies.

The board was originally established under the Post-secondary Education Act 1978, but this was changed in 1990 with the passing of the Vocational Education and Training Act in June 1990. This Act also provided a legislative framework for changes to apprenticeship, in particular for the introduction of CBT and the simplification of administrative procedures.

The Office of the State Training Board was originally established as an associated administrative unit within the Ministry of Education. The role of the office was to advise the minister on VET and skills formation policy, support the work of the STB and other authorities and administer the State Training system. In 1992, the office became part of a new Department of Employment and Training.

In January 1990, fifteen Industry Training Boards were established, with another four being created the following year. The major function of these boards was to develop Industry Training Plans, which would encompass predicted outcomes of industry restructuring, needs arising from changes in technology, the likely training outcomes of award restructuring and present and future skills required for industry.

The TAFE colleges retained the same level of autonomy they had always enjoyed, although they did have to enter into performance agreements as a condition of funding. In 1987, two existing colleges, Collingwood and Preston, were consolidated into a new college, the Northern Metropolitan College of TAFE. To give appropriate impetus to making training a very high priority and encouraging greater industry participation, the Vocational Education and Training Act, 1989 was assented to in June 1990. Under this Act, the thirty-one TAFE colleges and private providers were, with certain exceptions, empowered to deliver training. However, a number of institutions were still administered by individual Acts. These were the Victorian University of Technology, the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture, Swinburne Ltd, Gordon Technical College, the School of Mines and Industries and Ballarat Ltd. The effective and efficient management of these colleges under their Acts was the responsibility of the college council.

Australian Capital Territory

In July 1987, responsibility for TAFE in the Territory was transferred from the Commonwealth Department of Education to the Australian Capital Territory administration which was part of the portfolio of the Minister for the Arts and Territories. In 1988, enabling legislation came into effect which formally amalgamated the former Canberra, Bruce and Woden Colleges and the Office of ACT Further Education to form the ACT Institute of TAFE as a statutory authority. Also established under the Act was the ACT Institute of TAFE Advisory Committee, which had a membership of seven who represented private and public industry, unions, community, teaching and student bodies and whose main function was to provide advice to the director of the institute on all matters relating to the functions of the institute.

In 1989, the Australian Capital Territory became self-governing, and responsibility for TAFE was transferred to the new government's Minister for Industry, Employment and Education. The ACT Vocational Training Authority replaced the former Apprenticeship Board and had responsibility for the administration and promotion of vocational training for apprentices and the ATS in the Australian Capital Territory. The authority also oversaw the Australian Capital Territory and region Industry Training Advisory Boards. In 1990, the ACT Accreditation Agency was formed to supersede the Commonwealth Committee for Accreditation of Tertiary Awards.

Queensland

In December 1987, the Queensland Government approved the formation of a new department, the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training (DEVET). This department was made up of the Division of TAFE and senior colleges, administered by the Minister for Education and the Division of Employment Planning and Training, formerly part of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs.

As well as administering the thirty-two colleges, the new department also had responsibility for the administration of the apprenticeship and ATSs and for setting and maintaining standards in private training institutions. Also in 1987, the Queensland Government established the Queensland Employment, Vocational Education and Training Board (QEVET) to provide advice to the minister.

Following a change of government and as a result of the rationalisation of State Government operations in December 1989, DEVET and the Department of Industrial Affairs were amalgamated to form the Department of Employment, Vocational Education Training and Industrial Relations (DEVETIR). An interim Bureau of Employment, Vocational Education

and Further Education and Training was formed within DEVETIR. This was the first step towards the formation of a new commission. The bureau was responsible for the administration of all TAFE and senior colleges. The head of the bureau was responsible to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations on policy matters and to the director-general of DEVETIR for all staff and administrative matters. The head of the bureau was also the chairman of QEVET.

In September 1990, a green paper was released on the *Formation of Technical and Further Education, Training and Employment Commission*. This paper was distributed widely seeking community views on the formation of a commission. Following the analysis of responses, significant changes were made to the administration and organisation of TAFE in Queensland. The basis of these changes was to separate policy from delivery of VET.

The Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 1991 was passed in the Queensland Parliament in July 1991. The Act established the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission (VETEC) to replace QEVET. The functions of VETEC were to:

- advise the minister on the development of frameworks for the State's vocational education, training and employment services
- advise the minister on vocational education, training and employment strategies, which will complement State economic and social development
- determine policy related to regulated training including apprenticeship, traineeship and other training systems
- determine policy relating to accreditation and ratification
- confer with and, where it is considered necessary or desirable, extend recognition to other bodies within or outside the State on matters relating to vocational education, training and employment services
- undertake research in relation to the vocational education, training and employment system
- advise the minister on curriculum policy formulation
- advise the minister on capital work planning in relation to the VET system
- recognise VET establishments as approved training organisations
- advise the minister on the most effective application of appropriation approved by Parliament for the purpose of vocational education, training and employment services

The Act also established three councils under the commission. The first was the State Training Council, which was a tripartite body responsible to the commission for all matters related to structured training, in particular apprenticeships and traineeships. The second was the State Planning and Development Council, which was set up to provide independent advice to the commission on short- and long-term priorities for vocational education, training and employment services. The third was the Accreditation Council, which had responsibility for all accreditation matters and for providing independent advice to the commission on the quality of VET. An Office of the Commission was established to support the commission and its councils.

TAFE operations were administered through TAFE•TEQ (TAFE, Training and Employment Queensland) which operated within DEVETIR. TAFE•TEQ's functions fell into the four sub-program areas of Foundation Education, VET, Labour Market and Training and Delivery Services. From 1992, TAFE•TEQ programs were delivered through a regionalised management structure headed by five regional directors.

South Australia

In 1989, the South Australian Department of TAFE merged with the Office of Employment and Training and the Youth Bureau to form the Department of Employment and TAFE (DETAFE). In 1992, the Office of Tertiary Education also became part of DETAFE. The department's responsibilities encompassed the State's role in employment programs, training support and higher education policy, as well as the operation of the TAFE college system. The minister with responsibility for the Employment and Technical Further Education portfolio, also had responsibility for the administration of the Industrial and Commercial Training Act and for the Tertiary Education Act.

Legislative authority to approve training programs for declared vocations, traineeships and pre-vocational courses lay with the Industrial and Training Commission. For other award courses, the power of accreditation was held, under delegation, by the chief executive officer of DETAFE or by the director (Curriculum Services) depending on course length.

The public TAFE system was managed under the TAFE Act and consisted of a network of nineteen TAFE colleges operating on sixty-seven campuses and through other outreach and access techniques. The educational program was divided into seventeen groups, of which fourteen were vocational areas and four were preparatory or foundation areas. The management of the educational program was shared between the colleges and the program groups. The colleges were responsible for the delivery of programs within the context of the community they served, while the program groups provided advice to the department on budgets, resources, curriculum, teaching methodologies and other related matters.

Western Australia

Following amendments to the Education Act assented to in December 1988, the Office of TAFE was established as a separate administrative entity within the Ministry of Education. The executive director of TAFE was named as the designated officer under the Act in respect of TAFE matters. Other changes announced at that time were the devolution of managerial responsibilities to colleges, with central office retaining a policy development, strategic planning, resource allocation and monitoring role and the creation of a cluster arrangement for TAFE colleges, evening technical schools and centres, to group small- and medium-sized institutions into larger, regional TAFE delivery systems. College resource agreements were also introduced as a means of formalising annual budget allocations, facilitating campus management and enabling the process of monitoring achievement of the office's corporate objectives. A separate Department of Technical and Further Education was established in November 1989.

In 1990, the State Employment and Skills Development Authority (SESDA) Act established the authority as the State's peak training board. The Act also provided for the establishment of a Skills Standards and Accreditation Board and Industry Employment and Training Councils. Delivery agencies such as the Department of Employment and Training, the Department of TAFE and the independent colleges were required through the SESDA Act to address the needs of industry as identified by the Authority and the Industry Employment and Training Council network.

After a fairly short existence, in 1992 the Department of Technical and Further Education was merged with the Department of Employment and Training to form DEVET. The central office of DEVET provided a central focus on policy formulation, planning, resource co-ordination, equity, employment and labour market program co-ordination and curriculum integration. A DEVET council of directors constituted the senior management group in TAFE and included a strong contingent of representatives from the colleges.

The authority to deliver TAFE courses was delegated to four city colleges, four regional colleges and three independent colleges in remote areas. TAFE colleges were arranged into

regional clusters by linking several campuses and centres to form multi-campus institutions. This reduced the number of metropolitan colleges from a previous thirteen to four. This was aimed at enabling greater decentralisation from central office and a more comprehensive regional coverage of the metropolitan and rural areas.

Tasmania

In 1989, TAFE moved from the Department of Education to become part of the Department of Employment, Industrial Relations and Training (DEIRT). There was also a Training Authority of Tasmania, which was a statutory authority and reported directly to the minister. The authority was linked to, but not part of, the department, although officers of the department provided services to it and its committees. The authority was responsible for administering the Commercial and Training Act which prescribed conditions applicable for apprentices and trainees.

Administratively, the secretary of the department was responsible for the Training Authority of Tasmania and four divisions. These were Training, Industrial Relations and Employment Services, Adult Education and Corporate Services. TAFE college principals were responsible to the General Manager, Training.

Authority to deliver TAFE courses was delegated to the three multi-purpose TAFE colleges and one specialist hospitality college. These were Hobart Technical College, Launceston College of TAFE, the North West Regional College of TAFE and Drysdale Hospitality College. Each college had a college council which provided advice to college directors on matters of maintenance, capital expenditure on buildings and equipment and the provision of TAFE in Tasmania.

New South Wales

In March 1988, the Liberal Party came to power and immediately set out to change education in New South Wales. On 25 April 1988, the New South Wales Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Dr Terry Metherell, announced the establishment of a 'far-ranging review of management practices' in his portfolio, under the direction of Dr Brian Scott. This review included the Department of Education, the Department of Technical and Further Education and the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs. The recommendations of the review of TAFE were released on 15 September 1989, although the full report was not completed or released until mid-1990.

The first report, entitled *TAFE restructuring*, recommended that:

- TAFE become a statutory authority to be called the TAFE Commission
- TAFE colleges be divided into twenty-four networks which would become the primary planning, co-ordinating and quality control centres of the TAFE Commission
- the size of the central administration be reduced to less than one-third its current level
- ten Industry Training Divisions replace the twenty-five Teaching Schools to plan, co-ordinate and contract the production of curricula in line with national and State skill needs and in response to local industry requirements

The report also recommended that the new TAFE Commission seek to become fifty per cent self-funding by the end of the century and a subsidiary corporation be established to enable managers to pursue commercial, financial and other direct links with industry.

The restructuring recommended by the review was aimed at achieving a major devolution of operational responsibilities. It was recommended that the major responsibilities of the new central executive of the TAFE Commission should be limited to:

- overall corporate planning, including curriculum and human and physical resource planning and setting performance objectives

- financial planning and treasury functions
- general management co-ordination, including marketing and development; policy development; overall quality assurance and information systems development and oversight

In line with the devolution of authority, it was proposed that the senior management positions at network level should parallel the senior executive structure in terms of major areas of responsibility. These areas of responsibility were defined as: educational planning and quality assurance; marketing and development; finance and systems and human resources. By the beginning of 1990, the new senior executive had been appointed and by mid-1990, the training division chiefs and network managers were also in place.

In June 1990, the final report of the Management Review, called *TAFE's commission for the 1990s*, was released. This report fleshed out the recommendations made in the previous report. The New South Wales Government had originally expected that much of the cost of restructuring would be covered by the sale of land owned by TAFE. However, as the recession progressed and land prices fell, this source of income proved to be insufficient.

By the time the TAFE Bill was presented to Parliament, it had been substantially altered from that published in Scott's final report. The new Act, the Technical and Further Education Act 1990, was passed late in 1990 and proclaimed in February 1991. This established the new TAFE Commission. Although an interim board had operated in 1990, following the proclamation of the new Act, a completely new TAFE Commission Board was appointed.

Two other Acts were enacted around the same time. One of these was the Adult and Community Education Act which established a new board of Adult and Community Education (ACE) to advise the minister. The other was the Vocational Education and Training Act, which established the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) as a statutory authority, to oversee all accreditation and articulation between post-secondary skills and training organisations, including in-house and business and industry training.

In August 1991, the minister and managing director announced that from the beginning of 1992, TAFE operations were to be based in eight institutes of TAFE and three institutes of technology. Four of the institutes of TAFE were to be in the Sydney metropolitan area and four in the country. The institutes of TAFE would be an interactive system of colleges which would serve a clearly defined geographic area. Each institute would be headed by a director. The institutes of technology were to be based in Sydney, the Hunter and the Illawarra and would differ from the institutes of TAFE in that they would provide a range of programs recognised on a statewide basis. The original ten Industry Training Divisions and the three Education Training Divisions which had been established in the basic and pre-VET area were to remain and were to retain their statewide functions but were to be located within the institutes. As the establishment of the institute framework was designed to devolve operational responsibility for program delivery to institute directors, most of the equity units such as the Aboriginal Education Unit, the Multicultural Education Unit and the Women's Unit were transferred from the Central Support area to the institutes where they also retained their statewide function. The only unit which remained in Central Support was the Disabilities Unit, which became part of the Student Services Division. The recasting of central management roles and functions resulted in a restructuring of the central administration. Central support staff numbers were reduced from about 1200 people to fewer than 400. The new Central Support units were mostly involved in system-wide strategic planning, co-ordination, capital development, policy, resource allocation and audit.

Conclusion

Although the restructuring of TAFE by State and Territory governments showed similarities and common themes as a result of similar imperatives, in practice the new structures and administrative arrangements showed the same diversity that has characterised TAFE systems over the past 100 years. The restructuring, while significantly changing individual TAFE systems, did not make them more alike.

The first similarity in the restructuring was the tendency for State and Territory governments (with the exception of the Northern Territory) to move TAFE from the education portfolio and include it in the employment and training portfolio. However, even with consensus of direction, there were significant variations in how TAFE and the training and employment agencies were integrated. These differences reflected the historical development of technical education in each State and Territory. In general, in States like Queensland and Tasmania, where responsibility for TAFE had remained within the Department of Education before it was changed to employment and training, there was a much closer integration of the two agencies than in New South Wales where TAFE had been a department in its own right for over forty years. Other States, such as Tasmania and Western Australia, still had legislative responsibilities under the Education Act, although Tasmanian TAFE became administratively part of a new employment-focussed department and Western Australian TAFE had responsibilities under the SESDA Act. While the Victorian STB was established under its own Act, a number of VET institutions retained their historical and separate identities by still operating under their own Acts but working co-operatively with the board.

Another common trend was the move by all TAFE authorities towards commercial activities and revenue raising. The changes to Commonwealth funding arrangements mentioned in the previous chapter removed the prohibition on charging fees in TAFE for courses undertaken for the purpose of upgrading skills and income. The 1989 guidelines for TAFE funding went further than just removing restrictions and actively encouraged TAFE colleges to adopt a more entrepreneurial role in the provision of services to industry. It was also stated that:

> *State authorities are implementing arrangements to enable TAFE to retain a major proportion of income generated from fee-for-service activities for developmental purposes. This has represented a fundamental change in some States and puts in place a structure to support increased industry contributions to formal training in TAFE.*
>
> (Department of Employment, Education and Training 1988, p.2)

The impetus for increased TAFE involvement in commercial activities also came from State Governments which were finding it difficult to provide sufficient funding to meet the demands for TAFE places. Although none went as far as the Scott report did in New South Wales in specifying a target of fifty per cent self-funding—a level which was later agreed to be unachievable—all governments saw the potential for the generation of income through commercial activities. Again, each State and Territory set up different arrangements to facilitate these activities. New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory all established formal, centralised structures for co-ordinating and managing local, State and national commercial activities. Tasmania, Victoria and the Northern Territory colleges had college-based arrangements for these activities, with Victorian colleges actively competing between each other. South Australia and Queensland maintain a decentralised yet basically cross-college approach, operating independently from the colleges with the central office also providing a separate service.

Another area of similarity was the general move to devolution of authority to the colleges. However, again, different strategies and structures were used to meet the different characteristics of TAFE in each State. In a number of cases (for example, New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland) the devolution of operational authority was accompanied by the combination of individual colleges into larger administrative units. In New South Wales, this was first done by the creation of twenty-four networks. When this proved to be too unwieldy and expensive, the twenty-four were then amalgamated into the eleven institutes. In Western Australia, colleges in the Perth metropolitan area were amalgamated into four major multi-campus complexes. In Queensland, a system of regions was introduced, with a senior manager being appointed as regional director. Victoria retained its system of autonomous colleges, and the Northern Territory also moved to this model.

The late 1980s and the early 1990s saw the structure and operation of TAFE in all States and Territories changing significantly, with some States suffering several changes of structure within a fairly short time-frame. In most cases, these changes reflect the political and economic environments operating at both State and national level rather than specific management or administrative problems which required resolution.

9 From TAFE to VET

Introduction

The early 1990s saw the continuation of the implementation of Commonwealth Government policies for training outlined in *Australia Reconstructed* and *Skills for Australia*.

As John Dawkins said:

> *Following the 1987 Federal Election, I accepted my present portfolio on the understanding that its originally proposed name be rearranged so that the word 'employment' was placed first. I did this in order to emphasise that policies in education and training must be subordinate to the national economic imperative of achieving the optimal employment of our people.* (Dawkins 1990)

This view was not only adopted by the Commonwealth but by most States and Territories who had, by 1991, transferred TAFE from the education to the employment and training portfolios. Although this view had merit in theory, the emphasis on employment and the influence of the training regulators on policy and programs meant there was a wide gap between the policy makers and the VET providers, particularly the public sector providers such as TAFE. This gap was exacerbated by the lack of formal representation by TAFE on national advisory bodies such as NBEET.

As Robinson points out:

> *The Commonwealth-induced changes are part of a much wider objective of restructuring industry, with training playing a prominent part in the restructuring process. What is unique to Australia is the use of industrial relations procedures as the instrument for industry restructuring . . . As part of a coherent policy of change, Government efforts have initially been focussed on the introduction of competency-based training, on increased private sector investment in training (to be achieved through the vehicle of the Training Guarantee legislation passed in 1990) and on national consistency in standards (to be achieved through the National Training Board established in 1990.* (Robinson 1990, p.42)

The Deveson report

In May 1990, the Conference of Commonwealth and State Labour ministers considered a report from the Commonwealth/States Training Advisory Committee (COSTAC) which highlighted the need for additional government funding for training and related issues. The conference decided to establish an independent committee, the Training Costs Review Committee, to advise on likely future training costs. The committee's report was released in 1990.

The key findings of the report were that award restructuring was expected to have an impact on training costs that was likely to be felt over a time-frame extending to five years, rather than the two initially envisaged, and that it was expected to result in a shift in training provision with higher levels of internally co-ordinated industry-funded training. As unmet demand for TAFE was already high and demand was likely to increase as award restructuring provided benefits to individuals, governments were urged to take action to enable and encourage industry to increase its training effort and to promote high quality and wide acceptance of industry-provided training.

The report also called for nationally consistent arrangements for training programs to be recognised, accredited and monitored to be established as appropriate and nationally

consistent arrangements for individuals to have their skills recognised, both for the purpose of industrial recognition and for access to further training.

Whilst acknowledging that TAFE still had an important role to play in the provision of training, the report advocated a change in the balance of TAFE activities which would increase the proportion of its activities related to service to industry on a full cost recovery basis. It was also recommended that targets should be set for entrepreneurial activity. The report also said that governments needed to commit themselves to a steady increase in the volume of publicly funded TAFE activity and recommended an increase of five per cent per annum in real terms for the next five years.

In looking at who should pay for training, as well as making recommendations about the role of government, the committee also considered the responsibilities of industry and individuals. The committee noted that both employers and unions broadly accepted that much of the enterprise-specific training which would occur under award restructuring would be undertaken on-the-job or in-house and that employers would meet the cost either by delivering their own enterprise-based training program or by purchasing training products from external training providers, including, but not exclusively, TAFE. Another option identified was for employers to meet the costs of individual workers attending external training courses.

The committee also looked at the issue of fees and charges in TAFE. While recognising that the income benefits to graduates from TAFE were relatively low in comparison to the benefits gained by higher education graduates, the committee felt that this did not represent a case for a TAFE system which did not have fees and charges. However, the report said that there was no persuasive case for substantial individual contributions to meet the cost of TAFE. It was also felt that equity problems could arise if substantial fees were set in TAFE colleges without adequate exemption or concession arrangements. However, the committee also found that the existing arrangements for fees and charges in TAFE were unsatisfactory and needed to be made more rational, open and equitable. The committee also considered the issue of the introduction of a Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) for TAFE students. However, the committee decided that there were considerable equity and practical problems in introducing such a scheme in TAFE and the cost of training arising out of award restructuring did not warrant the immediate introduction of such arrangements.

Establishment of the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee

Following the release of the Deveson report, a second ministerial conference was convened by John Dawkins in November 1990. The main purpose was to discuss the recommendations of the Deveson report. The ministers agreed to:

- implement CBT
- develop integrated curricula for on- and off-the-job training (based on competency standards endorsed by the NTB)
- establish a national framework for recognition of training
- develop a national market for delivery of VET
- establish an integrated entry-level training system

This meeting also established a new advisory committee, the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee (VEETAC) to replace COSTAC and agreed to abolish the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors. VEETAC was to report to the Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET), which replaced MOLAC.

The first meeting of VEETAC was held in November 1990. The Commonwealth took firm hold of the agenda by securing the chair of the committee and providing the secretariat. It was decided to establish a number of working parties/steering committees to carry forward decisions of the 2 November Special Ministerial Conference; the recommendations of the

Training Costs Review Committee; work previously undertaken by the former COSTAC working parties; and work undertaken by the ACTD.

A working party was established to look at the national recognition of training. The working party developed a national framework for:

- the accreditation of VET courses
- the determination of credit transfer between training programs and award courses
- the registration of training providers of such programs and courses
- the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and the assessment of competencies

This framework, called the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT), was endorsed by MOVEET for progressive implementation from 1992.

VEETAC also established a working party on the implementation of CBT to develop implementation plans, timetables and options for resourcing the process. The Australian Committee on TAFE Curriculum and the Joint Committee on TAFE Statistics were continued but with wider representation. The membership of both of these was extended to include membership from industry and training. Although ACTD had been abolished, it was recognised that there was still a need for the chief executive officers of TAFE to meet as a group to discuss operational issues. A TAFE Operations and Coordination Committee (TOCC), which later became the National TAFE Chief Executives Committee (NTCC), was established as a standing committee of VEETAC.

The Finn report

At its 59th meeting in October 1988, the AEC agreed to establish a working party on links between schools and TAFE. The report of the working party was considered by ministers at the 62nd meeting of the AEC in June 1990. One of the resolutions was to form a small group of officials to develop an issues paper and to recommend an agenda for the national review of post-compulsory education and training. Having considered the issues paper, at the 63rd Meeting (December 1990) ministers established a further committee, with an independent chair (Mr T B Finn), to undertake a further review of the future development of post-compulsory education and training in Australia.

The major issues the review committee was asked to consider, included:

- the appropriate form and level of a new national target for participation in post-compulsory education and training, an appropriate basis of measurement of that target, and a recommended timetable and strategies for its achievement
- appropriate national curriculum principles designed to enable all young people to develop key competencies
- the means by which links can be drawn between different education and training pathways and sectors to expand the options available to young people and to achieve national coherence in entry and exit points between education, training and employment
- the appropriate roles and responsibilities of schools, TAFE and higher education in the provision of post-compulsory education and training for young people

A major theme of the report was the fact that general and vocational education, and work and learning, were too sharply divided in traditional Australian attitudes and practice. The implication was that both schools and TAFE would need to change: schools to become more concerned with issues of employability and the provision of broad vocational education; TAFE to recognise that initial vocational courses must increasingly be concerned with competencies that are more general than those which, for example, characterised the traditional craft-based apprenticeships.

Within this broad context, the committee recommended the adoption of a new national completion/ participation target that, by the year 2001, ninety-five per cent of nineteen year olds should have completed Year 12, or an initial post-school qualification or be participating

in formally recognised education or training. The committee also asked AEC/MOVEET to endorse six key areas of competence deemed to be essential for all young people engaged in post-compulsory education and training. These were:

- language and communication
- mathematics
- scientific and technological understanding
- cultural understanding
- problem solving
- personal and interpersonal competencies

The report recommended that all post-compulsory education and training programs for the 15–19 age cohort should include, with their overall expected outcomes, appropriate levels of competence in these six key areas.

The report also recommended that MOVEET should continue to give high priority to reform of entry-level training arrangements as a key step in achieving the proposed national completion/participation targets and that governments should agree to introduce a post-compulsory education and training guarantee whereby all young people would be guaranteed a place in school or TAFE after Year 10 for two years of full-time education or training or its equivalent part time for three years. As these recommendations had considerable implications for both schools and TAFE, the report suggested that all States and Territories review their policies and practices at the school/TAFE interface with a view to maximising credit transfer and articulation between the sectors and they should also define clearly the respective roles of schools and TAFE in the provision of education and training for young people in the immediate post-compulsory period.

These recommendations were accepted at a joint AEC/MOVEET meeting in 1991. The meeting established another committee, the Mayer committee, to develop employment-related key areas of competence in post-compulsory education and training for young people and to establish agreed national standards for these key areas.

The Mayer committee's report defined 'key competencies' as:

> *Key competencies are competencies essential for effective participation in the emerging patterns of work and work organisation. They focus on the capacity to apply knowledge and skills in an integrated way in work situations. Key Competencies are generic in that they apply to work generally rather than being specific to work in particular occupations or industries. This characteristic means that the key competencies are not only essential for effective participation in work but are also essential for effective participation in further education and adult life more generally.* (Mayer 1992, p.5)

The committee proposed a set of seven key competencies that young people need to be able to participate effectively in the emerging forms of work and work organisation, together with principles to provide for nationally consistent assessment and reporting of achievement of the key competencies. These were:

- collecting, analysing and organising information
- communicating ideas and information
- planning and organising activities
- working with others and in teams
- using mathematical ideas and techniques
- solving problems
- using technology

Ministers endorsed the definition of key competencies and agreed that the seven key competencies identified by the committee were essential for all young Australians. The report was referred to States and Territories for further consultation on implementation of the key competencies.

The Carmichael report

In August 1991, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, asked the ESFC to consult with groups and individuals on four related issues. These were:

- a new entry-level training system for Australia
- the TAFE systems in the 1990s
- Commonwealth subsidies for employers under CRAFT (apprenticeship) and ATS
- allowances for education and training, including the possible extension of AUSTUDY to part-time students and people being trained by private providers of education

The ESFC was also asked to take into consideration changes proposed in the Finn report. The basis for the consultations were two documents called *A new structured entry-level training system for Australia* (the Carmichael report, DEET 1991), and *TAFE in the 1990's: Developing Australia's skills* (ESFC1991).

The main recommendation of the Carmichael report was the establishment of a competency-based Australian Vocational Certificate System. The main feature of the system was the merging of apprenticeships and traineeships into a new training system which would provide a flexible range of fully articulated, substantially work-based, training pathways. The scheme also proposed that the existing award wage rates for young people be replaced by trainee wages. Thus payment for training time should be based on the level of competence attained, the amount of time spent on the job in structured training or productive work and the value of the competencies demonstrated by the trainee on the job, calculated as the proportion of the wage of a fully competent worker.

Like the Finn report, the scheme also set targets for participation and proposed that by 2001, the new system should provide flexible delivery arrangements to meet the training participation targets of ninety per cent completing Year 12, ninety per cent attaining NTB level 2 vocational certificates and sixty per cent attaining level 3 certificates or higher qualifications. To meet these targets, it was recommended that there should be the development of more vocational options in Years 11–12, more extensive use of contextual learning methods, the nation-wide development of public and private senior colleges to provide more mature learning environments for delivery of upper-secondary programs and improved careers education.

TAFE's future role was recommended as being to develop as institutions with a predominant (but not exclusive) focus upon advanced VET, from ASF certificate level 2 up to diploma level. As well, closely linked networks of senior colleges, TAFE colleges and private and community providers of off-the-job training should be developed for the flexible delivery of VET. These networks should be supported by framework agreements in each State and Territory, and any costs incurred by any students in vocational courses up to the completion of Year 12 be paid by State or Territory governments under the Youth Guarantee. It was also suggested that students who completed Year 12 could undertake a 'vocational year' [Year 13] delivered by TAFE or senior colleges. In addition, it was recommended that all labour market program guidelines should be reviewed, and all publicly funded labour market programs should articulate into formal mainstream vocational certificate training, except where it was demonstrably not appropriate for particular clients.

Following agreement by ministers in 1992, a series of Australian Vocational Training System (AVTS) pilots were developed and implemented in 1993 and 1994. The AVTS was to be progressively implemented from 1 January 1995. However, the change of government in 1996 saw the AVTS replaced by a different system of training, the New Apprenticeship system.

Commonwealth funding of TAFE

One of the working parties established by VEETAC to follow up the Special Premiers Conference issues was the Training and Labour Market Programs Working Party. This

working party submitted a report to VEETAC which provided a number of options for Commonwealth-funding arrangements for TAFE, one of which was for the Commonwealth to provide full funding of TAFE.

In October 1991, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, unveiled a proposal that the Commonwealth Government assume full financial responsibility for TAFE and other post-secondary education and training. The Commonwealth Government would take control over policy but leave administrative responsibility with the States. The States would also retain responsibility for funding TAFE courses to the equivalent of Year 12. There was an immediate but negative reaction from State ministers. Although they acknowledged the need for increased funding, they said it was the effects of the Commonwealth's economic policies which had led to the recession and, in particular, the high level of unemployment that was putting pressure on State and Territory TAFE systems. If the Commonwealth had the money available, it should immediately be allocated to the States.

At a joint meeting on 18 October 1991, the AEC and MOVEET agreed to give further consideration to this proposal and established a working party to consider all options for the assignment of future financial responsibilities between the Commonwealth and States in education and training. The working party was also asked to assess both the short- and long-term implications of the Finn committee targets for 15–19 year olds. The report of the working party highlighted the need for additional funding to enable TAFE to meet the unprecedented level of demand which would need to be satisfied nationally by governments in 1992 and successive years.

The proposal for the Commonwealth to fully fund TAFE was included in the prime minister's Economic Statement (called 'One Nation') of February 1992. This statement proposed a comprehensive package for the establishment of a new system of VET. The package included the proposal that the Commonwealth would take full funding responsibility for VET, including the transformation of TAFE into a new and expanded system of institutes of vocational education. The Commonwealth would also seek the involvement of the States, industry and training providers to address the emerging needs of industry for advanced training for high level technicians. The package also proposed a process of reform to entry-level training arrangements (that is, the implementation of the Carmichael report's Australian Vocational Certificate) which would involve the Commonwealth, the States and Territories, the industrial parties and training providers. Funding would also be provided to:

- open more apprenticeship/traineeship places for young people
- further stimulate the growth of skilled training opportunities for young people through the provision of additional pre-vocational training places
- give additional funding for Group Training Schemes and 'at-risk' apprentices
- expand Labour Market Program places

The provision of an additional $720 million for TAFE over the 1993–95 triennium was dependent on the proposal to fully fund TAFE. This was to be discussed and negotiated bilaterally with the States. However, many States, particularly the smaller States, expressed their concern over the whole matter of Commonwealth/State-funding arrangements.

In a surprise move, Prime Minister Paul Keating announced in an interview on a Sunday morning current affairs television program on 31 May 1992 that if the States would not agree to the Commonwealth taking over funding and control of TAFE, the Commonwealth would set up its own vocational and training system. This stand was softened later in the week when the prime minister proposed interim funding arrangements, which meant that the States would continue to fund their TAFE systems for the next three years. He also softened the threats made on national television to use the $720 million in One Nation funds earmarked for TAFE to build a 'parallel' network of VET centres (Bita 1992).

The Premiers Conference, held on 12 June 1992, did not resolve any of these issues. Not only was there conflict between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories but also between States. New South Wales and Victoria fought for a greater share of revenue and for a change in the formula to a per capita basis as they stated that they had been subsidising the

smaller States for years. The smaller States wanted to maintain the existing formula of 'fiscal equalisation' as it was aimed at ensuring that all citizens were treated on an equal level. As a compromise, the prime minister agreed to increase the Federal Government's initial offer from $150 million to $166 million, with the additional $16 million being divided up between New South Wales and Victoria. This ensured that both New South Wales and Victoria received what they wanted on a per capita basis, while the other States received what was due to them under the Grants Commission formula. Overall, the Commonwealth Government raised its general payments to the States by 5.9 per cent. These measures did not satisfy New South Wales or Victoria, who claimed they were still subsidising the other States.

At the Premiers Conference, the prime minister announced that he was convening a Youth Summit in July 1992 to discuss measures to address the unacceptably high levels of youth unemployment. He also reaffirmed his intention to restructure the TAFE system. The Premier of Victoria, Joan Kirner, put forward an alternative proposal for the reorganisation of TAFE by suggesting the establishment of a tripartite body of industry and State and Commonwealth representatives to run a national TAFE system. The Commonwealth and States would notionally buy 'equity' in the authority through the contribution of existing funding plus the extra Commonwealth money. It was suggested that the States' contributions could be debited against their current financial assistance grants. This would overcome the problem of States' resistance to the change in State- and Commonwealth-funding arrangements which was one of the stumbling blocks to the States' accepting the One Nation offer.

The establishment of an Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was subsequently announced the day before the Youth Summit. It was agreed that the States and Commonwealth would jointly fund the national training system through ANTA, with States maintaining their financial effort on an ongoing basis. The Commonwealth would not only maintain its current effort but would also add the $720 million announced in the 'One Nation' statement in February 1992. All growth funding for 1993 would be allocated on a proportional basis in accordance with population shares. The Commonwealth also agreed to meet ANTA's running costs.

The ANTA Agreement

The main aim of the ANTA Agreement was to promote:

- a national VET system, with agreed objectives and priorities, assured funding arrangements, consistent national strategies and a network of providers delivering high quality, nationally recognised programs at the State and local level
- close interaction between industry and VET providers to ensure that the training system operates within a strategic plan that reflects industry's needs and priorities
- an effective training market, with public and private provision of both high level, advanced technical training and further education opportunities for the workforce and community generally
- an efficient and productive network of publicly funded providers that could compete effectively in the training market
- increased opportunities and improved outcomes for individuals and target groups, including school leavers, to enhance their employment outcomes
- improved cross-sectoral links between schools, higher education and VET

The new national arrangements consisted of:

A ministerial council to oversee ANTA (MINCO) and be responsible for decisions on strategic policy, national objectives and priorities and funding. MINCO was to be chaired by the Commonwealth minister and consist of one minister responsible for VET from each State and Territory and the Commonwealth.

The Australian National Training Authority which was a board of five industry representatives set up as a Commonwealth Statutory Authority.

State training agencies which were to be distinct bodies within a National Training System with responsibility for VET within their own borders.

These arrangements were incorporated in the Australian National Training Authority Act 1992.

The ANTA Board was appointed in December 1992 on a part-time basis for a period of three years. In accordance with the ANTA Act, ANTA assumed the full range of its responsibilities from 1 January 1994.

In early 1994, the ANTA Board targeted four priority areas. These were to:

1 build a client-focussed culture
2 create and promote opportunities for lifelong learning
3 advance a national identity for the system
4 reward innovation and best practice approaches

The basis of the ANTA Agreement was funding. Under the Agreement, the Commonwealth Government undertook to provide $70 million per annum for three years for growth in the system. States and Territories agreed to 'maintain effort'.

The main vehicle for allocation of recurrent, growth and capital funds was through State/Territory State Training Profiles. These were required under the ANTA Act and were intended to provide a single and comprehensive plan for the provision and support of VET for the immediate year ahead and indicative estimates for the following two years. The profiles concentrated predominantly on government-funded activity and fee-for-service activities being undertaken within the States and Territories. This incorporated information regarding public funding of private providers. Also under the Agreement, ANTA was required to provide an *Annual national report* to the Commonwealth Government on the operation of the national VET system.

With the establishment of ANTA, a number of programs were transferred from the Commonwealth DEET to ANTA. These included recurrent and capital funding under the Vocational Education and Training Act 1992; National Projects; Skill Centres; Training Needs Curriculum and Materials; Innovative Projects; funding for Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs); Workskill Australia; ACE; Group Training Arrangements and Support for Traineeships. Funding for Labour Market Programs and the AVTS remained with DEET.

State/Territory arrangements

The ANTA Agreement required each State/Territory to have appropriate legislative arrangements which acknowledged the national role played by ANTA and which designated a State/Territory body as the State Training Agency for the purposes of the agreement. Following the ANTA Agreement, States and Territories reviewed their structures to either nominate an existing agency as the State Training Agency or to create a new body to carry out the functions. Two States and one Territory already had existing statutory bodies and therefore had only to amend legislation, although some restructuring occurred.

The Victorian STB was nominated as the State training agency. Subsequently the Victorian Government reconstituted the STB as a six-member industry-based expert board replacing the fifteen-member 'representational' board. In addition, the functions of the board were altered to emphasise its primary role of providing advice to government on VET and to formalise its role as the State Training Agency for Victoria for the purposes of the ANTA Agreement. The functions of ITABs were focussed on their prime role of advising on training needs and promoting training. The Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE) was restructured to better focus on client service, resource management, quality and change management and strategic planning, rather than on operational matters.

The Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission was nominated as the State Training Agency. At the beginning of 1994, the Queensland State

Training Authority consisted of the Office of VETEC, which reported to VETEC and which was responsible for the development of policy, resource planning and allocation and recognition of providers. Operational areas were part of DEVETIR which reported to the minister. During 1994, a review of the structure of DEVETIR's Division of Employment and Training Initiatives and VETEC was undertaken. In August 1994, a merger of the two areas was implemented. TAFE Queensland reorganised the thirty-two colleges into sixteen larger institutes.

The Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority was designated as the Territory's State Training Agency, and the necessary legislative amendments were passed during 1994.

In New South Wales, there were a number of government agencies which had been set up to advise the government on particular aspects of VET. As none of these agencies covered the whole range of public and private VET activity, in September 1992, the then Minister for Education and Youth Affairs and Minister for Employment and Training announced the establishment of an interim New South Wales Vocational Education and Training Agency (NSW VETA). The interim board of the agency was asked to consult widely and develop proposals for the minister on future arrangements for the co-ordination, planning and management of VET in New South Wales. In mid-1993, the interim board recommended to the government that a New South Wales Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) be established to fulfill the functions of a State Training Agency. The new board of nine members was appointed in November 1993, and legislation establishing BVET was proclaimed on 1 July 1994. The board was supported by an office which was administratively responsible to the Director-General of the Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education (DIRETFE). The structure and functions of the NSW TAFE Commission remained unchanged. Following the 1995 State election and consequent change of government, new portfolio arrangements came into effect. The industrial relations sections of DIRETFE were moved to other portfolios. A new department called the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination (DTEC) was formed by the merging of the training sections of DIRETFE, the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs and the central co-ordination services of the NSW TAFE Commission.

In South Australia, the then Minister of Education, Employment and Training announced the government's decision to establish VETA. In December 1992, a discussion paper (green paper) was widely circulated. This paper set out the parameters for change that the government believed was required and proposed options for consideration by interested parties. At the same time, the Department of Employment and TAFE was amalgamated with the Department of Education and the Department of Children's Services to form the Department of Employment, Education and Training South Australia (DEETSA). Following the State election and change of government, the department was again restructured to form DETAFE. Draft legislation for the establishment of a new board and further public consultations were undertaken. New legislation was passed in late 1994 naming the minister as the State Training Agency and creating a Vocational Education, Employment and Training (VEET) Board, an Accreditation and Registration Council and an ACE Council. The minister delegated his State Training Agency powers to the VEET Board which was supported in its responsibility by DETAFE.

In Western Australia, the ANTA Agreement coincided with the review of the State Employment and Skills Development Authority. In February 1993, there was a change of government. The new government commissioned a review of education and training in Western Australia and a report was tabled in July 1993 (the Vickery report). In line with the recommendations in the report, SESDA was abolished, a Western Australian Department of Training (WADT) came into operation in December 1993, an STB and a Training Accreditation Council were created and the network of Industry Training Councils was revised. The report also proposed the establishment of autonomous colleges with governing councils. Implementation of these changes entailed the development of new legislation covering the whole of training in Western Australia.

In the early 1990s, a number of structural changes were made in Tasmania. Three regional institutes of TAFE were established, together with a specialised hospitality institute (Drysdale Institute of TAFE). These replaced the pre-existing six TAFE Colleges. The department with responsibility for TAFE and training, the Department of Industrial Relations, Vocational Education and Training (DIRVET), was restructured to separate planning and policy management from TAFE operations. The Tasmanian State Training Authority (TASTA) was established under legislation to replace the Training Authority of Tasmania. All legislation was replaced by a new Act, the Vocational Education and Training Act, which was proclaimed in early 1995.

Following a comprehensive process of consultation, the Australian Capital Territory introduced new legislation in 1995 for the co-ordination and management of the Australian Capital Territory system of VET, including the establishment of a State Training Agency. The new legislation established the ACT VETA and the Vocational Accreditation and Registration Council.

The Australian Qualifications Framework

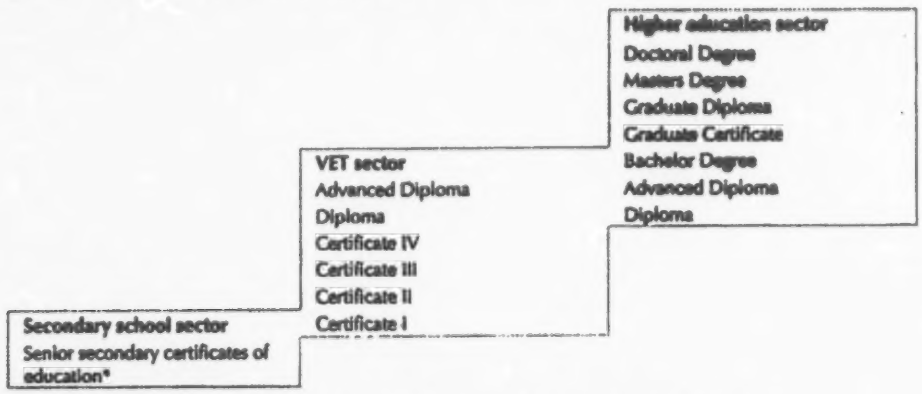
In 1993, a further step was taken towards national consistency when education ministers endorsed the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF was designed to be a comprehensive, nationally consistent, flexible framework for all qualifications in post-compulsory education and training. The AQF was developed through a collaborative process involving the Commonwealth, States and Territories in consultation with representatives from industry, government and the education and training sectors.

The main aims of the AQF were to:

- provide consistent recognition of the outcomes achieved
- recognise previous achievements
- help the development of pathways to assist continuous learning
- provide terms of reference for qualifications in post-compulsory education and training

The twelve levels of qualifications are shown in figure 1. The AQF replaced the descriptors of the Major National Tertiary Course Award levels established by the Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE). The Australian Qualifications Advisory Board (AQAB) was established to oversee and monitor implementation of the AQF. Introduction of the AQF commenced on 1 January 1995, and it was anticipated that full transition would not be completed until 1999.

Figure 1: Australian Qualifications Framework



*The term 'senior secondary certificate of education' is a general title for qualifications at this level. Individual State and Territory senior secondary school qualifications retain their current titles and requirements.

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Review of national training reforms

In October 1993, ministers agreed to review the implementation of training reforms. ANTA engaged the Allen Consulting Group to undertake research, case studies and consultations and to recommend steps that ANTA and MINCO could take to facilitate the acceptance and effective implementation of the reform program.

The consultants submitted their report, *Successful Reform*, in June 1994. The group concluded that while there was broad support for the reforms, some objectives were imprecise or obscure and did not form a satisfactory base upon which to build practical strategies. The apparent lack of strong business support for the reforms was a key matter for concern. Other conclusions were that key elements in the chain of reform were not working well together, micro-economic reform in the publicly funded VET sector had been tackled only obliquely, the concept of the training market was too limited and the reforms had been constructed from a supply-side perspective and driven by a top-down policy approach. The general view was that:

> *the elements of reforms do not represent a complete overall strategy but rather a loosely connected set of relevant policies. Insufficient attention has been paid to the management of change. Performance planning and reporting in terms of outcomes has not been adequate and accountabilities and responsibilities have been confused.* (Allen Consulting Group 1994, p.iii)

The report made a number of recommendations aimed at improving the implementation of reform and achieving its fundamental objectives. The central recommendation was that implementation of reforms should be refocussed on the demand side. This was described as developing a training market centred around direct client relationships between providers on the one hand and enterprises and individuals on the other, and in which the skills held by individuals are publicly recognised and portable to the maximum extent possible. As a means of achieving this, the report recommended that a major element of 'User Buys' be introduced by progressively passing government funding for structured entry-level training in apprenticeships and traineeships to the employers and trainees who would jointly decide on the purchase of recognised off-the-job training.

The ANTA Board considered the Allen Consulting Group's report and developed a series of proposals based on the recommendations for ministers to consider at their September 1994 meeting. The board found widespread support for many elements of the national training reforms, particularly for CBT; AVTS; national recognition arrangements and a national qualifications framework. However, it also found that many of the elements of the reforms were seen as overly regulated, overly prescriptive, cumbersome and lengthy.

Ministers gave in-principle support to the proposals and set up an implementation committee to further progress the proposals and to report back to the May 1995 meeting. It was agreed that the first priority should be the establishment of new structural arrangements, and it was proposed that the NTB, ACTRAC and the National Staff Development Committee (NSDC) be amalgamated to form a new body called the Standards and Curriculum Council (SCC). This council was given responsibility for competency standards, national curriculum development, the implementation of NFROT, the progression of assessment proposals, overseeing quality assurance programs funded by ANTA and the implementation of the VET section of the AQF. The NSDC came within the new structure.

White Paper: Working nation

In early May 1994, the Commonwealth Government released its white paper on Employment called *Working nation* (Keating 1994). The white paper announced a package of policies and programs aimed at reforming labour market assistance; training and education reforms; a restructured social security system; a regional strategy; workplace agreements and microeconomic reforms to remove impediments to competition and assist firms to develop international markets.

The central part of the government's strategy was the *Job Compact* through which people who had been on unemployment benefits for eighteen months or more would be offered individual case management, training and support to ensure they were job ready and a job for six to twelve months. The white paper also aimed to improve the skills of young people through the Youth Training Initiative which would provide a labour market or vocational training place to 15–17 year olds who were still unemployed six months after registering with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). A target was set for the provision of 50 000 additional entry-level training places by 1995–96. The paper recommended the introduction of a new training wage to apply where employers provide recognised training. This would replace the multiple industry specific rates for traineeships.

To encourage a commitment to training by business and industry, the government established a National Employment and Training Taskforce (NETTFORCE). The main role of NETTFORCE was to encourage employers to make more jobs and training places available to unemployed people and to give interim approval to training packages. Twenty-one industry training companies were established to assist NETTFORCE. The purpose of these companies was to develop new traineeships or adapt existing ones and to assist in marketing traineeships and brokering plans with employers. NETTFORCE negotiated a structured approval process for new traineeship packages with all States and Territories.

Other measures announced in the white paper included the establishment of the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) to forge closer links between industry and schools; the establishment of Area Consultative Councils by the CES to work with local communities to make employment programs and training more relevant to local needs; and the opening up of case management to competition from providers drawn from the private and community sectors. The white paper also suspended the Training Guarantee for two years from 1 July 1994 to encourage employers to take on trainees.

From TAFE to VET

Prior to 1992, government attention focussed on the public provision of school, TAFE and higher education. While to a large extent this continued to be the case for schools and universities, since the establishment of ANTA there was a move from TAFE to VET. VET was defined as encompassing public, private and community education and training as well as work-based training. TAFE was therefore regarded as just one part of Australia's VET system.

Although much of the discussion about reform of VET concerned the development of an 'open' or 'competitive' training market, this discussion was couched in ideological terms. As Fisher pointed out:

> *Since the late 1980s ministers for vocational education and training, and their policy advisers have advocated the need to develop a national training market. However it is rare to find any discussion of what this market involves. Nor are there any explanations of the perceived gains or discussion of how disadvantages might be alleviated.* (Fisher 1993, p.27)

The arguments for a competitive training market were based on the view that the TAFE system had a monopoly on VET, there was a lack of responsiveness by TAFE to the needs of industry and there was a need to give greater attention to the 'demand side' of the market. The need for greater efficiency and for cost savings were also quoted. As Fisher points out, in discussions of the demand side of the equation, buyers/consumers were invariably defined in industry terms with little or no regard for the social objectives of public policy nor the students or trainees. As well, the eminence attached to industry priorities in the training market rarely clarified who is to speak for industry and how disagreements within industry or conflicts of interest are to be handled.

Although the idea of a competitive training market has been the dominant theme of discussions about the reform of VET since 1992, its genesis is not clear. It appears to have been

derived from the Deveson report, *Training costs of award restructuring*. The report proposed that governments in co-operation with industry needed to:

> *ensure that training regulation—both the requirements of industrial training legislation and the teaching arrangements in TAFE—assist the development of more open and flexible training markets. Action should be taken to reduce, to the greatest extent possible, the duplication of training effort.* (Training Costs Review Committee 1990, p.66)

This recommendation was made in the context of both industry and private providers wanting fair and reasonable access to accreditation systems in order to be able to ensure appropriate recognition of in-house or non-government training. The report quotes the submission by the Business Council of Australia which noted that a key policy issue in creating a competitive market for the supply of training is:

> *to design systems for the recognition and credentialing of training which acknowledge the legitimate aspirations of individuals to have their skills recognised without introducing costs and inefficiencies into enterprise-based training.* (Training Costs Review Committee 1990, p.22)

The first formal use of the term 'national training market' by Commonwealth and State ministers appears to be in the *National goals for vocational education and training* approved by the Ministers of Vocational Education, Training and Further Education (MOVEET) in 1992. This statement included as one objective the goal to 'develop an efficient, effective, responsive and integrated training market'. To quote Fisher, 'this brevity was quite consistent with the lack of explicit consideration of this phrase by ministers at the meeting' (Fisher 1993, p.28).

A report by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *Developing the training market of the future*, said that although to date the concept of a training market has been ill-defined and characterised by a high degree of terminological inconsistency, it is generally considered that such a training market will:

- stimulate greater competition among public and private providers and thereby increase incentives for providers to respond to client needs, particularly enterprises/industry
- enhance efficiency and effectiveness in publicly funded training
- increase private investment in training by individuals and enterprises/industry
- promote the development of a more integrated and nationally consistent training system

The concept of the development of the training market was also influenced by National Competition Policy. In October 1992, the prime minister initiated a National Competition Policy Review. The committee was chaired by Professor Fred Hilmer. The committee saw its task as 'proposing the most effective form, content and implementation approach for a national competition policy that will support an open integrated domestic market for goods and services'. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the principles articulated in the Hilmer report at its Hobart meeting in February 1994. The main emphasis of the report was on three sectors: public utilities (electricity, gas, rail); the professions and agricultural marketing. However, there were attempts at Commonwealth level and within some States and Territories to also apply the principles to VET. Although legal advice from Commonwealth and State attorney-generals concluded that VET did not come within the scope of national competition policy, it did have an impact on national and State VET policies, particularly the putting of public funds out to tender.

The first National Strategy *Towards a skilled Australia* (ANTA 1994) gave high priority to the expansion of the training market through contestable funding arrangements. The first and second strategies under the heading *Greater Responsiveness* were:

> *Each State and Territory will give further impetus to mechanisms that open up their training market. These will be detailed in their training profiles.*
>
> *State and Territory initiatives to allocate more funding on a competitive basis will be expanded in 1995 and beyond.*

A discussion paper by Fooks, Ryan and Schofield (1997, p.13) notes that ANTA has been eclectic about the training market in that it has pursued vigorously the open market concept

but, at the same time, has clung strenuously to the idea that TAFE will continue to be an instrument for pursuing government policy. ANTA is also quoted as stating that TAFE provides the means of providing a guard against market failure as it provides opportunities of scale not possible in smaller institutions and because it offers a way for governments to provide training which is important to industry but may not be economically viable for the private sector to deliver. The discussion papers says that 'in other words, TAFE is to be education's version of the Flying Dutchman, instructed to go forth and compete but forever destined to beat against the wings of regulation and directions from which all its competitors are exempt'.

The second half of the 1990s saw efforts to develop a competitive market and increase the numbers of training providers expanded through the introduction of the concept of user choice and national priorities which explicitly stated that the level of contestable funding should be increased. This put considerable pressure on TAFE institutes across Australia.

10 TAFE in the late 1990s

Introduction

When the Liberal-National Party Coalition Government came to power in March 1996, it introduced a wide-ranging reform program designed to reduce the budget deficit through expenditure savings.

One of the ways of reducing expenditure was by shifting the focus of the public sector to that of policy advice and a purchaser of services rather than a provider of services. Major changes included:

- the abolition of the CES and its replacement by a competitive market for employment services called the Job Network. This was a national network of around 300 private community and government organisations contracted by the Commonwealth Government to finding jobs for unemployed people
- the establishment of a new agency, Centrelink, to deliver a range of services on behalf of several departments through a service agreement. Centrelink was set up as a statutory authority, responsible, through its board, to the Minister for Social Security. Services provided by Centrelink included:
  - all services formerly provided by Department of Social Security offices, as well as childcare and student assistance payments and services
  - registration and acceptance of all new applicants for income support and employment assistance
  - self-help job search facilities
  - referrals for employment assistance
  - specialised labour market assistance services for disadvantaged groups
- the reduction of spending on Labour Market Programs and the cashing out of programs such as JobSkills, the Landcare and Environment Action Programme, the New Work Opportunities Program and training allowances

The above changes and the change in focus from service provider to purchaser of services resulted in significant structural changes to the Department of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). Within two years, departmental staffing fell from 16 000 at its peak to somewhat less than 4000. The department's State-based network declined from 293 outlets when the CES was fully operational to 46 in 1998. At the beginning of the Coalition Government's second term of office, the employment function was removed from DEETYA and given to the industrial relations portfolio.

As part of the 1996–97 Budget, the government also announced the introduction of new arrangements for the delivery of income support programs, including AUSTUDY. From 1 July 1997, Centrelink combined the delivery of student assistance with the delivery of payments and services for young people. The Youth Allowance replaced an array of income support arrangements such as AUSTUDY, unemployment benefits and training allowances. The Youth Allowance was subject to a parental means test, and young people were required to meet an activity test which involved studying full time, looking for work or doing a combination of activities. The government also introduced the concept of 'Mutual Obligation', which required young people who had been unemployed for six months to participate in Work for the Dole, attend literacy or numeracy training, voluntary work or participate in a government-funded program.

The government's VET policies were based on the principle of non-bureaucratic and relevant training that leads to 'real jobs'. An important part of the Coalition's policy was the expansion of vocational education in schools. $20 million of ANTA funds for each of four years was promised to support accredited VET for school students at senior secondary level.

Although the pre-election policy, the *Coalition Commitment to Schools and TAFE*, included proposals for the development of a National Plan for TAFE and the establishment of TAFE/Business Roundtables in every State and Territory to promote stronger links with industry, these appeared to fall off the agenda after the election. The cornerstone of the Coalition Government's policies for VET was the introduction of the Modern Apprenticeship and Traineeship System (MAATS), later known as the New Apprenticeship System, which was aimed at making fundamental reforms to Australia's apprenticeship and traineeship system.

As far as the Coalition's policies for VET funding were concerned, the new directions and ideology soon became very clear in the negotiation of the second ANTA Agreement.

Review of the ANTA Agreement

The ANTA legislation required a review of the agreement after five years. In 1995, the then Prime Minister, Paul Keating, appointed Mr Rae Taylor to undertake a review of the ANTA Agreement. The report of the review was presented in February 1996. The recommendations fell into the following broad areas:

Better Management and Clearer Roles—it was recommended that ANTA focus more clearly on its core business of advice on national policy and strategic directions, planning and management of national funding arrangements and reduce its emphasis on operational activities.

Funding Achievements—it was recommended that the maintenance of effort provision of the ANTA Agreement be retained but play a less central role in its administration. It was also recommended that ANTA give high priority to improving the accuracy, comprehensiveness, coverage, comparability, timeliness and relevance of VET data and that national VET be agreed by ANTA chief executive officers for endorsement by MINCO.

The review considered the role of TAFE and stated that although there was a clear role for a publicly owned TAFE within the VET system, there was resistance in parts of TAFE to the direction of national training reform, particularly in the growing role for markets and competition. This was attributed, in part, to a failure to articulate a clear role for TAFE within a growing VET sector. The report gave the following rationale for maintaining and developing a strong and efficient TAFE system within a wider VET system.

the community has a big investment in the system which has a large and skilled workforce:

- *the size of the TAFE systems provides opportunities for economies of both scope and scale not possible in smaller, single institutions*
- *there will continue to be a need for investment in high cost facilities and training for occupations that have few members but are of key importance to industry. This training is unlikely to readily attract private investment and the community cannot afford for it to languish*
- *the history of vocational training in Australia has demonstrated the volatile and cyclical nature of industry commitment to vocational education and training. The ownership of the TAFE infrastructure gives government the means to ensure stability and respond quickly to emerging needs*
- *TAFE's widespread infrastructure, experienced staff and array of student support services provide a ready facility for delivering appropriate education and training options for disadvantaged groups*

- *the TAFE country network is a community facility that could not be readily replaced*
- *the blurring of boundaries between schools, vocational education and higher education suggests a logic in having a government service in all three sectors* (Taylor 1996)

The report recommended that TAFE providers needed to be put on a proper commercial basis, with services fully costed and with transparency in the way community service obligations were funded. Governments also needed to define more clearly the scope of services they required TAFE to provide, both in terms of client groups and geographical spread, and fund these appropriately.

The report noted that there was a strong policy basis within the ANTA Agreement to pursue market and competition reform within VET. The report recommended that ANTA develop a national policy on competition in VET for consideration by MINCO and that State and Territory governments establish a clear separation of functions between the purchaser and providers of training.

The recommendations of the report of the review were considered by ministers in September 1996, and it was agreed to forward advice on a new ANTA Agreement to the November 1996 meeting of COAG. However, COAG cancelled this meeting, and no further action was taken until the Commonwealth proposed a meeting of States and Territories in July 1997 to discuss a new agreement.

At a special MINCO meeting held in September 1997, agreement was finally reached on national VET funding arrangements and a new three-year ANTA Agreement. A joint statement said that the Commonwealth had agreed to maintain VET funding in real terms ($890 million in 1998) over the next three years. In return, States and Territories agreed in principle to achieve growth in their VET systems through 'efficiencies'. This meant that the Commonwealth was no longer funding growth in the system. The virtual extinction of funding for labour market training programs meant that Commonwealth funding for VET was in fact reduced ,and the onus was, therefore, on State and Territory governments to fund the growth generated by Commonwealth initiatives such as New Apprenticeships.

The New Apprenticeship system

The stated aim of the New Apprenticeship System was to make training, particularly entry-level training, an attractive business proposition for a much wider range of enterprises, thereby expanding employment and career opportunities, particularly for young people and increasing the international competitiveness of Australian enterprises through enhancing workforce skills.

On 24 May 1996, MINCO endorsed six key principles to underpin the development and implementation of New Apprenticeships on a national basis. These were:

- an industry-led system
- streamlined regulation
- expanded training opportunities
- regional and community involvement
- a national framework
- access and equity

Ministers agreed that New Apprenticeships would be defined by three characteristics. These were:

- a registered training agreement
- a negotiated training program leading to a nationally recognised qualification
- paid work and structured training

New Apprenticeship Centres (NACs) commenced operation on 1 May 1998 as part of the Job Network. They were established to streamline services to employers, apprentices and trainees by providing 'one stop' integrated support services. One of their key functions was to administer the Commonwealth's incentives program.

Although there was a significant increase in traineeship numbers following the introduction of the New Apprenticeship system, particularly in traineeships delivered entirely on the job, there was a decline overall in the number of apprentice numbers. An analysis undertaken by OTFE in Victoria showed that there had been a steady decline in the number of apprentices undergoing training in Victoria, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the workforce. Between 1980 and 1996, while the number of persons increased by twenty-four per cent, the number of apprentices in training decreased by sixteen per cent. Moreover, the apprentice to workforce ratio shifted from the pre-1990s recession figure of about 2.2 per cent to about 1.6 per cent since 1993 (OTFE 1998, p.1). In November 1998, the Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations released a report on Apprenticeship and Traineeship trends that showed similar trends. In Queensland, total apprenticeship commencements fell steadily from a decade high of 11 337 in 1995 to 9427 in 1998, a fall of 16.8% in three years (Smith 1998).

Although New Apprenticeships were designed to assist young people, school leavers and the unemployed enter the labour force, there was evidence that in at least some States young people in the 15–20-year age group, particularly early school leavers, were increasingly being locked out of structured training. The Queensland analysis of apprenticeship and traineeship trends showed that the percentage of trainees accounted for by the younger age groups fell from seventy-seven per cent in 1994–95 to thirty-two per cent in 1997–98.

A report by Bob Marshman & Associates, *The employment of apprentices: The barriers*, undertaken for ANTA in 1996, concluded that:

> *Apprenticeship numbers in traditional areas do not appear to be declining because of inadequacies in the national training system. Reforms such as modularisation, national standards, a competency based approach, a competitive training market, user choice and the increasing flexibility of the public provider TAFE have widespread support.*
>
> *On the other hand the vocational preparation of young people, the changing demographics and skills of the applicant pool, the image and status of the trades as a worthwhile career, the extent of government incentives for the employment of apprentices and the impact of economic and industry restructuring and competitiveness on the capacity of employers to enter into 3–5 year commitments were the subject of widespread discussion and concern.*
>
> *The solution to the current problems will not be found in further reforms to the training system although it is important that the current directions be continued. They will be found on an industry by industry basis, of the conditions on which employers make decisions to employ apprentices and the policies and programs that are needed to support that employment. These conditions have changed and the changes are likely to remain.* (Marshman 1996, p.6)

A flaw of the New Apprenticeship system was that since it was based on employment, it did not overcome the fundamental weakness of traditional apprenticeships—that of the need for employers to take on apprentices. When the only entry to a training system is through employment, this can constitute a considerable barrier to access. The main difference between the New Apprenticeship system and the AVTS which it replaced was that the AVTS included an institutional pathway.

User choice

A key part of the New Apprenticeship system was that from 1998, all public funding for apprenticeships and traineeships would be subject to 'user choice' principles under existing funding arrangements. User choice was aimed at making training delivered off-the-job more responsive to the needs of industry and individual enterprises by linking the decisions about training directly to the users.

The principles of user choice agreed to by ministers were:

- Clients are able to negotiate their publicly funded training needs.
- Clients have the right to choose a registered provider and negotiate specific aspects of their training.
- User choice is part of a national training market.
- The provision of accurate and timely information about training options is necessary for informed choice.
- Pricing of training programs by State/Territory Training Authorities should reflect clearly identified program costs.
- Customisation over and above that which is publicly funded may be negotiated and purchased by the client.
- User choice will be used to improve access and equity in the VET system.
- Evaluation of the outcomes of user choice is important for continuous improvement.

User choice has been described as being:

> *based on a view that a free market produces rational service distribution and price competitiveness. These factors combine to increase market choice and market access. It also assumed that consumers are reasonably adept at making the correct purchasing decisions.*
>
> *The basis of user choice can be described as:*
>
> - *a view that rational provision will come from a free market*
> - *a view that education and training can be evaluated as economic outcomes only*
> - *a view that customers know their own needs well*
> - *a view that customers can distinguish effectively between education and training products*
> - *a view of government as customer rather than service provider* (Maddock 1998, p.269)

Most States recognised that user choice was more likely to operate effectively in industry and geographical areas where there were large numbers of apprentices and trainees. User choice arrangements therefore generally reflected the need for special arrangements for 'thin' markets.

National Training Framework

As part of the implementation of an industry-driven system, in 1996 ministers agreed to the introduction of a new National Training Framework (NTF).

The framework was designed to ensure that:

- training products and services available through public and private training providers reflect both industry and enterprise requirements
- the skills and qualifications which individuals acquire are portable across the country
- employers can have confidence in the quality of training undertaken by a prospective employee from another part of the country
- employers who operate in more than one State or Territory are able to put common training arrangements in place across their organisation
- individuals and enterprises could gain access to a range of high quality and affordable training products and services

The main components of the NTF were Training Packages and the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF).

Training Packages were developed by ITABs and endorsed by ANTA's National Training Framework Committee. They included competency standards, assessment guidelines and associated qualifications which would underpin delivery across all key industry areas and in a number of major enterprises. The endorsed components might be supported by a range of

other materials, including learning strategies, professional development materials and assessment materials.

The ARF was developed to support the implementation of Training Packages while, at the same time, achieving a more streamlined quality assurance approach to recognition. The focus of registration changed from recognition related to the provision of accredited courses to recognition for the provision of particular products and services primarily related to Training Packages. The products and services an organisation could be registered to provide were:

- training delivery, assessment and the issue of nationally recognised qualifications and Statements of Attainment
- skills recognition services (assessment only) and the issue of nationally recognised qualifications and Statements of Attainment

The term 'Registered Training Organisation' (RTO) was introduced to denote that registration was no longer linked only to delivery of training.

A key feature of the new arrangements was the concept of 'Mutual Recognition'. The Mutual Recognition principles established that all national AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by an RTO must be accepted and recognised by any other RTO.

The West review of higher education

In January 1997, the then Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Senator Amanda Vanstone, appointed a committee to review Australia's higher education system in order to develop a policy and financing framework to enable the sector to meet Australia's social and economic needs. The committee, chaired by Roderick West, presented its report to Dr David Kemp, the new minister, in April 1998.

Although the report was primarily about higher education, the committee found it difficult to define the boundary between higher education and VET. The committee noted that linkages between the two sectors had improved significantly during the 1990s with institutions concentrating on credit transfer, RPL and recognition of the benefits derived from co-operative arrangements. The committee also mentioned the flow of students from TAFE to universities and the even greater flow of people from universities to TAFE. On this basis, the committee decided that 'separate regulatory and funding arrangements for the two sectors mean that the best use is not being made of the resources available for post-secondary education in Australia' (Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy 1998, p.85). While the committee accepted that TAFE and higher education occupied different roles, it contended that student choices were made more complicated by the different arrangements concerning government funding of each sector. The major thrust of the report was for 'Student Centred Funding for Teaching and Learning'.

The review committee recommended a four-stage approach to student-centred funding of post-secondary education. The stages ranged from a proposal recommending incremental change to a proposal that funding arrangements across the higher education and VET sectors be standardised. When the report was presented to Parliament, both Minister Kemp and the prime minister gave a commitment that the government had no intention of introducing vouchers for post-secondary education, and no action was subsequently taken to implement the recommendations to change either higher education or VET funding arrangements.

House of Representatives report into institutes of TAFE

In 1997, the then Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Amanda Vanstone, asked the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, chaired by Dr Brendan Nelson, to inquire into and report on:

- the appropriate roles of institutes of technical and further education
- the extent to which those roles should overlap with universities

The committee released its report, *Today's training, tomorrow's skills* in July 1998. This was the first major review of TAFE since the Kangan review in 1974. A central theme of the report was that governments have failed to clearly articulate their vision of Australia's TAFE system, and its status urgently needs to be 'rebuilt' in the VET sector. The report pointed out that TAFE clearly dominates the VET sector, enrolling eighty-two per cent of its 1.35 million students and providing almost ninety-five per cent of the hours of training delivered.

Although the committee agreed that the industry-focussed approach to VET was the right one, it proposed that a provider perspective be injected into the ANTA advisory structure by including TAFE representation while retaining an industry focus. The report recommended that membership of the ANTA Board be amended so that:

- *one of the current number of Board members be chosen, in future, from serving industry members or Presidents of TAFE Institute Councils, or their nearest equivalent according to the jurisdiction; and*
- *an additional Board member be chosen as soon as practicable from currently serving directors of TAFE institutes.* (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training 1998, pp.13–14)

The report said that institutes of TAFE play special roles which other providers of further education generally do not fulfil. It identified TAFE's primary role as the delivery of VET but 'strives to meet this role while monitoring social equity objectives. It is this unique aspect of TAFE that is its defining quality.' The report identified several special roles for TAFE. The first was the important role TAFE plays in the education, training and general life of regional communities and the fact that the existence of post-secondary institutions in regional areas also reduced the movement of young people to larger centres. The second was the valuable role TAFE played in the provision of opportunities for people who did not complete their secondary education and who may not otherwise pursue further education. The third was the provision of secondary education through TAFE for school age young people whose needs are not met in a traditional secondary school learning environment.

An important issue identified was that of community service obligations. The report said that:

> *if institutes of TAFE are to continue to play a key role in community service, it is vital that community service obligations such as providing second chance education, employment training and education for people with disabilities are recognised and funded appropriately. This is particularly an issue for TAFE institutes that teach a large proportion of disadvantaged students. It is important that there is continued support from all levels of government for TAFE to continue to fulfil its community service obligations.* (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training 1998, p.33)

TAFE's emerging roles were defined as being in the areas of: flexible delivery; VET in schools; general studies; and research. The report also recommended the removal of any barriers to institutes of TAFE establishing subsidiary companies or enterprises for the purpose of operating employment placement services and group training companies.

In considering TAFE's relationship with higher education, it was the committee's view that greater co-operation and better articulation between TAFE and higher education would result in benefits to students. The committee did not favour TAFE institutes offering degrees in their own right, as TAFE's core responsibility was to offer VET to meet the needs of industry and students. The committee enthusiastically supported the development of dual award courses which combine study in both sectors and recognise achievement with an award from each. Dual awards are typically two-year TAFE diplomas which articulate into university degrees with at least one, but usually two, years credit granted towards the degree. The committee also noted that university graduates were enrolling in TAFE courses in order to gain 'practical skills'.

The committee considered the various advantages and disadvantages of dual and multi-sector institutions and noted that 'dual sector institutions along Victorian lines are very popular with the institutions' chief executives, but the committee did not encounter much enthusiasm for the model elsewhere (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment,

Education and Training 1998, p.93). The committee also examined the recent trend for new educational campuses to be established which co-locate facilities from two or more institutions or sectors on the one site. The committee saw this model as offering the same benefits to students and taxpayers as the dual model but without some of the risks TAFE seemed to face in dual sector institutions under one administration. The committee recommended that the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs commission research into the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the different single- and multi-sector institutional models.

The committee did not 'presume to prescribe' a model for TAFE that all States should follow but believed that:

> *responsiveness can best be achieved by maximising the commercial and operational independence of individual institutes within a collaborative system which clearly articulates the role of individual institutes in meeting State policy objectives in VET. Institutes should be allowed to control and reinvest their commercial revenues provided their proposals are consistent with the priorities established across State systems. This should assist the development of industry centres of excellence as institutes capitalise on their areas of expertise.*
>
> (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training 1998, p.93)

The committee also suggested that State and Territory governments should consider the provision of triennial funding, including some capital funding, direct to institutes. This would enhance institutes' capacity to plan and respond to emerging local requirements and priorities for the development of programs and collaboration.

Although the committee's report was welcomed by TAFE institutes and some State Governments, it was effectively ignored by the Commonwealth on the basis that TAFE is a State and Territory responsibility.

Changes in State and Territory TAFE systems

In the late 1990s, a number of State and Territory TAFE systems underwent structural changes, usually, but not always, coinciding with changes of government. An interesting trend was the move by some States to re-incorporate TAFE systems with public school systems.

Tasmania

In July 1996, the Tasmanian Minister for Education and Vocational Training announced a major review of TAFE and Adult Education in Tasmania. The review, chaired by Mr Ted Best of Cadbury Schweppes Pty Ltd, examined:

> *Whether commercialisation or corporatisation of part or whole of the TAFE and adult education system would provide greater efficiencies and flexibility in providing quality training both to Tasmanians and to new, emerging opportunities in the national and international marketplace.*
>
> (DIRVET 1997, p.1)

The final report of the review was presented to the minister in March 1997. As a result of the review, the TAFE Tasmania Act 1997 established TAFE Tasmania as an independent statutory authority with body corporate powers and governed by a board of directors. The board was responsible to the minister for the performance of the functions of TAFE Tasmania.

Under the Act, from 1 January 1998, five product-based institutes of TAFE commenced statewide operations. The five institutes covered natural resources; industry; tourism and personal services; adult education and community services and business. Under the new arrangements, the funding and purchasing role continued to be performed by the minister, with advice and support of the Tasmanian Training Authority and the Department of Vocational Education and Training (DVET). TASTA was given a strengthened role in the purchasing, regulation and quality control of training.

Following a change of government in March 1999, the Education Minister announced a proposal to 'refine' the structure of TAFE Tasmania. The minister announced that the TAFE Board had endorsed a set of proposals that would refine the product-based structure by providing greater responsiveness. The proposals included a senior manager responsible for TAFE in each region and, in place of the five product-based institutes, eleven statewide programs which would operate on a basis similar to university faculties.

Queensland

In August 1999, the Queensland Government announced that the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 1991 and the Vocational Education and Training (Industry Placement) Act 1992 would be repealed and that two bills would be put to Parliament: the Vocational Education and Training Bill and the TAFE Institutes Bill. Changes to the system would include the replacement of the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission with a Queensland Training Authority.

The report which recommended these changes, *Vocational education and training in Queensland: Training for prosperity*, advocated that an increasing proportion of VET funds be allocated through competitive funding strategies to improve quality, efficiency and accountability in the provision of services (Queensland Government 1997, p.6). It was proposed that from January 1998, to decrease the level of bureaucratic decision-making in the funding process, individual TAFE institutes would be directly contracted to deliver specified VET. It was envisaged that institutes would become more independent and require fewer of the services traditionally provided from the TAFE State Office, which would be replaced by a Strategy Centre. This centre would have fewer staff and would focus on the overall strategic business direction of the TAFE institutes.

In June 1998 there was a change of government. The new government retained the 1991 and 1992 Acts and retained VETEC as the key authority. The government also proposed *A plan to safeguard TAFE in Queensland*. This plan proposed:

- an unequivocal commitment to public ownership of TAFE institutes
- to maintain contestable funding at January 1998 levels for three years to allow time for institutes to adjust to change; to provide additional funding for financially distressed institutes; to protect regional services and equity of access; and to ensure quality was not affected by competition
- a commitment to increased staff development
- the devolution of operational issues (apart from wages and employment conditions) to institutes to give them flexibility to manage improvement

Mr Kim Bannikoff was asked to lead a taskforce to undertake an extensive review of TAFE institutes and advise the minister on how to re-establish TAFE institutes in Queensland as key instruments of policy in VET. The report of the review was released in December 1998 (TAFE Review Taskforce 1998).

The review found that TAFE Queensland was 'in a fragile and confused state' as a result of being subjected to reform 'through the blunt instrument of increased contestable funding'. As managers of institutes focussed on administering a budget and salvaging sufficient resources for survival, the quality of products was not maintained, delivery in institutes declined and the skill level of staff declined. At the same time as funds for user choice and competitive funding were transferred from their base allocation, institutes were required to make other significant financial adjustments and cost savings. This resulted in 47% of the budget available to institutes being affected by cuts, efficiency savings, new management requirement or changed funding allocative procedures.

The review recommended that institutes be given increased autonomy so they could manage their affairs through contracts that specify performance targets, the resources available to achieve them and the accountability mechanisms that would apply. This would allow the diversity in the network to develop. Adequate resources should be allocated to them to fulfill

the public interest requirements that government wants and additional training could be purchased from them through contestable funding.

In July 1998, the Queensland Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, Mr Paul Braddy, unveiled a blueprint for the State's TAFE sector called *A Vision for TAFE Queensland*. The government undertook to re-establish TAFE Queensland institutes as

> *vibrant, effective organisations having 'best practice' responses to the policy interests of government, the vocational aspirations of individuals, the needs of students, enterprises and the community and the demands of the training market.* (Braddy 1999, p.2)

The document also said that the implementation of the vision for TAFE Queensland requires a transition to more autonomous and accountable institutes. The change in accountabilities would be specified in an Annual Resource Agreement with the Director-General of DETIR.

The *Vision for TAFE Queensland* said that not all activities could be conducted solely at the institute level. Therefore, a Board of TAFE Queensland comprising the sixteen institute directors would be responsible for taking action on statewide functions such as the industrial relations framework and a collective strategic and policy capacity. The chair and deputy chair of the board would be institute directors appointed by the Director-General of the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations (DETIR) and endorsed by the minister. The chair would have an additional role as the public spokesperson for TAFE Queensland.

The government also developed a TAFE Queensland Constitution which specified the responsibilities of the minister, institute councils, the Board of TAFE Queensland, institute directors, VETEC and DTIR in the governance of TAFE Queensland. The constitution specified the accountabilities and authorities of the various parties and clarified the relationship between them.

Victoria

In May 1997, the Victorian Minister for Tertiary Education and Training commissioned a Ministerial Review on the nature, extent and structural arrangements of TAFE institutes in the Melbourne metropolitan area. The review was chaired by Mr Paul Ramler, Director of Ramler Furniture and Deputy Chancellor of Monash University. The final report led to new structural arrangements for TAFE institutes.

In line with the recommendations, Barton, Casey and Peninsula institutes of TAFE were amalgamated to form the Chisholm Institute of TAFE, and the assets and liabilities of the Barton automotive campus at Richmond were transferred to Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE. Eastern Institute of TAFE was merged with Swinburne University of Technology and Western Melbourne Institute of TAFE was merged with Victoria University of Technology. The Victorian Government also decided to merge Ballarat University with the School of Mines and Industry, Ballarat and the Wimmera Institute of TAFE.

Following a change of government in September 1996, the new Labor Government established a new Department of Education, Employment and Training, and three ministers shared the portfolio responsibilities. These were the Minister for Education, the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment and the Minister for Youth Affairs. The Office of Further Education and Training became the Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment (PETE).

South Australia

In October 1997, a new Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) was announced. The new department included children's services; schools; TAFE SA; VET; employment and youth affairs. TAFE SA consisted of eight semi-autonomous TAFE institutes and TAFE SA Online, the distance education arm. TAFE Institute Directors reported to the Chief Executive of DETE through the Executive Director of TAFE SA. However, this changed in July 1999 when TAFE SA was absorbed into a new Office of Vocational Education and

Training within the South Australian Department of Education, Children's Services and Training.

In late July 1999, the South Australian Minister for Education and Training announced that a ministerial council was to be set up to determine VET priorities and priorities across four portfolios. The council would set policy directions which would be given to the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Board.

The minister also announced that in future, institute directors would be appointed by the institute boards rather than the government following the abolition of the central TAFE SA body. However, some central services would still be provided by the education department or the new Office of Vocational Education.

New South Wales

In December 1997, the NSW TAFE Commission, the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination and the Department of School Education were amalgamated to form the Department of Education and Training (DET). The new department was given responsibility for publicly funded early childhood, primary and secondary education and VET in both the private and public sectors. The department also covered higher education, ACE and the Adult Migrant English Service.

TAFE NSW retained its identity within the new organisation. The organisation structure within DET included a small TAFE Operations unit which had responsibility for the enhancement of, and provision of support for, the eleven TAFE institutes and the Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) in their day-to-day operations. The TAFE Commission Act and the TAFE Commission Board remained. The Director-General of the Department of Education and Training also became the Managing Director of the NSW TAFE Commission.

Northern Territory

In late 1998, a review of the Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority (NTETA) was undertaken by Mr David Rolfe. The findings of the report were presented to the government in March 1999.

The Rolfe review said there was evidence of significant gaps in the setting of strategic directions in the Northern Territory. There were also gaps in setting strategic directions to meet the training needs of Aboriginal communities.

The main recommendations supported by the Northern Territory Government were:

- that the restructuring of NTETA be completed, reviewed and restructured in a three-month period with a complete spill of positions and the out-sourcing of some administrative functions to other agencies
- NETA's support services for apprentices and their management be outsourced in a joint tender with the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) for an NAC
- staff numbers be reduced from seventy-two to 42.5
- budget savings of $4.5 million be achieved
- The government decided that the position of Chief Executive Officer of NTETA would remain separate from the Department of Education.

The future of TAFE

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, TAFE in Australia is facing a number of challenges.

A major challenge is that of continuing to provide the same quantum of high quality VET with ongoing reductions in government funding. Following the change of government in 1996,

Commonwealth growth funding ceased and recurrent funding for VET remained static, despite the increasing costs to States and Territories of implementing Commonwealth initiatives such as the New Apprenticeships, the implementation of Training Packages and the introduction of the Youth Allowance. The cashing out of the training components of a number of Commonwealth labour market programs effectively resulted in a cut in Commonwealth funding for training. Not only did this mean that an important source of revenue was no longer available, it also meant that programs for the long-term unemployed now had to be funded from State budgets. One of the results of the introduction of the Youth Allowance was an increase in the number of early school leavers enrolling in TAFE with the consequent need for the provision of increased support services and programs. Although the Commonwealth Government recognised the impact on schools and provided additional funding through the Full Service Schools program, no additional funding was provided for the 'students at risk' who enrolled at TAFE.

Another challenge is meeting the requirements from all governments for productivity improvements, increased efficiency and lower unit costs. As Robin Ryan points out:

> *Anyone who knows anything about the TAFE sector, where flexibility is highly constrained by industrial awards and strong unions, is aware that purported efficiency savings are coming from a wastage of educational sinews like staff development, industry up-dating and student learning support systems. To a great extent, quantitative gains are being purchased through quality losses.*
> (Ryan 1999, p.12)

This is putting greater pressure on TAFE institutes to try to maintain quality while demand is increasing and government funding is diminishing. There are also policy tensions, with TAFE institutes being expected to meet industry needs through customisation of courses, become more flexible in delivery and make greater use of new and emerging technologies with no acknowledgement of the resource implications of these initiatives.

There is ongoing pressure for TAFE institutes to increase their competitiveness in the training market in tendering for contestable funds, developing strategic alliances and increasing their revenue base through higher levels of commercial activity and increases in fees and charges.

There will also continue to be political and financial pressures on TAFE institutes resulting from the ever-changing policies, programs and funding arrangements of Commonwealth Government and State Governments and Territory Governments.

In providing the closing summary at a conference organised by NCVER in 1997 on *The market for vocational education and training: Who pays and who profits?*, the Chair of NCVER asked if the latest set of government reforms were to be evolution or revolution? He concluded that:

> *Of course, it's evolution. Those who've lived from the birth of TAFE in 1975, the modern TAFE system . . . will know that it will be evolution. We've survived the many reports, the many reviews too numerous to mention, the many new reforms of many new governments and TAFE soldiers on. TAFE will take it aboard, will marshal its forces; it will go on competing, marketing and delivering to many users' satisfaction and it will give many users very many good choices into the next century and beyond.*
> (Kirby 1998, p.428)

History has shown that TAFE in Australia has been a great survivor. Although TAFE faces significant changes in the years ahead, there is no doubt that it will again, as it has in the past, emerge from the current uncertainties, a larger and stronger part of the national education and training system.

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